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APPLETONS' NEW HANDY-VOLUME SERIES.

MASHALLAH!

64

A FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

BY

CHARLES WARREN STODDARD.

Mashallah.

STODDARD.

NEW YORK:
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A FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

BY

CHARLES WARREN STODDARD,

AUTHOR OF "SOUTH SEA IDYLS," ETC.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.
1881.

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1880.

TO

MME. LA BARONNE A—— D'E——.

NOTE.

THE following letters were written in the spring of 1876. Since that time the Egyptian Government has been severely shaken ; but, like those sand-storms that threaten annihilation, when they have passed over, the character of the country and the people is found unchanged.

For this reason I trust my notes of travel will not be deemed out of date.

C. W. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

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MASHALLAH!

A FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

I.

PARISIAN DAYS.

HÔTEL DU MONT BLANC, RUE DE SEINE, PARIS.

A LIGHT fall very of filmy snow lies like down in the two courts of the Grand Hôtel du Mont Blanc. There is something laughable in the grandeur of this dingy old caravansary in the heart of the Latin Quarter—it is so lacking in every element suggested by the name. It is true we have snow in the two courts, and the chambers, spite of the elegantly small French grates sunk away back in the chimney, are as cold as the crown of the great father of mountains; but, beyond this, I don't see the appropriateness of the title as applied to our hotel. Your French fires are too polite to roar, and too expensive to make up in quantity what they lack in quality—at least on this side of the river.

We are all Bohemians together as far as your eyes can count the chimney-tops; we glory in being ill paid for our works of undoubted genius; in the sweat of our faces we do not, as a general thing, eat bread, though it is always at hand, done up in crisp rolls as big around as your arm and full seven feet long; we prefer taking the light, nameless dishes that are served us over the way by the faithful and obliging Theodore, and where we can, if we choose, leave "a promise to pay" on the proprietor's book, where it hangs till American stocks go up in the market. Autographs are worth something in the Latin Quarter, as almost any one of us can prove to you toward the end of the month. Students drift naturally into the Quarter, it is so classical and so cheap; and very many of us seem to find the Mont Blanc our Ararat. The house is always filled with young fellows, mostly under five and twenty years of age, and the majority of these are Americans. I wonder how it is that we all chance to meet at one board as strangers, to grow fond, very fond of one another, to go out and come in together, and, at last, to part with some show of feeling (it is permissible in France), and with a sore heart that turns again and again to the old haunts, and asks itself ever the same question, "Shall we meet again as of yore, and sing the songs of the past, and agonize anew over the financial crisis that at times seemed to involve the en-

tire community—yes, when even the young republic apparently quakes to its foundation and threatens to go to the dogs?" Probably we never shall. We fully realize this, and at times, when the thought strikes us with fullest force, we drink deep potions of black coffee and cognac and smoke wildly against the day of our doom.

Mont Blanc, our castle, has an uninviting approach; the long, dark passage leading from the street to the court is very like a carriage way; the court is as ugly as a stable; even the small image of the Madonna in her niche above the passage sheds no charitable glow over the place. Nor is the *concierge* calculated to increase the patronage of the house by reason of any charm either spiritual or material. She was built for a very thin little woman, whose perpetual virtue was insured by reason of her excessive plainness. Not satisfied with her lot, she has undergone some partial transformation, whether natural or artificial I know not, which leads the casual observer to suspect that she has been blown up with a goose-quill until her eyes no longer focus; and yet she impresses you as being thin. Her flesh is a delusion; her eyes alone are beyond question—those fatal orbs keep watch on two sides of the court at once. She has knowledge of our most secret movements; all our hope is in her charity and loving kindness. She it is who receives and distributes the welcome home letters; the keys of our

chambers hang in a row at her side, and with a glance of her weather eye she can call the roll of the house and detect at once the delinquents. She can, if she chooses, exile us from the world, comparatively, for she has only to tell inquiring friends that we are out, when we are in, impatiently awaiting their arrival, whereat they cast us off for ever as being no longer worthy to be called friend. Ah, these tyrannous, omnipresent, second-sighted *concierges*, the destinies of France lie in their grasp! If I have been generous to this little woman in her sentry-box, she will direct you to my chamber; I know this, and am therefore as generous as I can afford to be. My key is out, I am in; *concierge* requests you to enter the second court and climb the stairs in the farther corner until you come to the roof—Room No. 55—this is my home.

In the Latin Quarter, the second court is even more uninviting than the first. It has the dejected air of a suppressed monastery. The walls are very high, and full of long French windows that are closely curtained, for we live so near together in the courts that it difficult to keep from prying into your neighbor's business. My stairs go round and round like a cork-screw; on the first landing you will find a pair of gaiters, rather well worn. They are always there till noon, and I take it the proprietor of these gaiters, whoever he may be, has a comprehensive knowledge of Paris by gas-

light. The second landing is scarcely more promising; there is a small kitchen on each floor, and this one is in use; a tidy woman is for ever stewing, and loading the air with garlic. The odor of singed steaks ascends to me when I care least for the carnal delights of life, and I am cut off in the midst of my best period by the hiss of the saucepan. But I have a kitchen all my own; I too can fill the court with the fumes of dinner at whatever hour I choose, though there is only a kind of left-handed consolation in the thought, as I always go out to dine. Knock at my door, for you can go no farther. *Entre!* A room no bigger than a billiard table, with a chimney filling one side of it, a window directly opposite, a door opening in on one end and one opening out at the other, for I sleep in the next apartment. There is scarcely room on the walls for the handful of photographs one is sure to take about with him—the dear home faces that do so much toward making the place habitable. My writing-table and two chairs obstruct the direct passage from door to door, and on festive occasion, when as many as six fellows have assembled at one and the same time, we most of us sit on the floor and smoke like regular Turks.

It is hardly worth while looking into the next room. The French bed is curtained with chintz of a pattern so like the wall-paper that they both seem of a piece. A clock, mirrors, toilet-stand,

chairs, and the slip of carpet before the bed, that is sure to skate out from under you over the waxed floor just when you are least expecting such a catastrophe, that is all, but it is as much as you can expect for the money. There are drafts in both rooms. There is no extra charge for drafts; they are not put down in your bill along with the candle, the soap, the towel, and the service. Every door, window, corner of the room, and crack in the floor sends up its chilling breath, and they all make for the chimney with the utmost speed. If you would be warm, keep away from the fire. It is utterly false, and hastens into the flue as if you hadn't paid for it and were not entitled to its feeble warmth. Yet here I write and look out of my window across the court, where one of the boys is at work on his sketches, and the hours pass rather too quickly (time never lags in Paris), for my work ought to be well over before breakfast. You see we take our coffee independently, when it is most convenient, say anywhere from 7 to 11 A. M.; coffee or chocolate and a bit of bread keep us in working trim until breakfast.

Breakfast is quite like a noon dinner, with soups and dessert, if we prefer them. It begins shortly after twelve o'clock and lasts an hour or two. We all meet at breakfast in the *crèmerie* over the street. It is there that Theodore, who is learning American very rapidly, attends to us

with a consideration worthy of a man of twice his years and experience. The affairs of the day are duly canvassed ; we plot a thousand pleasant things and live up to about half of them ; we discuss art, literature, the *prime donne*, music, and the masque. We burn the fragrant weed over tall glasses of black coffee, and grow boisterous, perchance, in argument or repartee, until a flying missile lands in our midst—a bread crust of convenient caliber—and civil war is declared for the space of five minutes. The bread flies in all directions ; the old frequenters of the *crèmerie* look on with a half-smile, as if they could excuse this sort of thing in Americans, but in no other people. Those who are new to us are filled with astonishment and alarm, and the plump proprietor, who has been sitting along with his pretty niece in the pulpit by the door, descends upon us like an irate pedagogue, and we are persuaded to silence and decorum. Between breakfast and dinner there are six hours at our disposal. We revisit the Louvre and the Luxembourg for the fiftieth time, going now to our favorite pictures and statues, and ignoring the miles of canvas and the quarries of marble that surround us on every side. Some of us return to work at the *atelier*, the studio, the chamber, wherever our work lies. We wander thither, singly or in pairs, and the *crèmerie* is left totally deserted. Dinner is even more joyous than breakfast, for we have probably

accomplished something, and our work is over for the day. We sit two or three hours at table; nothing but an early theatre or an engagement can turn us away from the luxury of our evening meal. But the *crèmerie* closes early, and we are gradually snuffed out of the establishment as the gas-jets are extinguished one by one. Then come visitations among the boys. There is a wide range of haunts to choose from; you can take a Bohemian quarter like my own, for instance, one of those cheerless resting-places such as a fellow on the wing grows horribly used to, or you can climb into a cozy nook in some great building where a resident student has feathered a nest for himself and is making the best of his life abroad. Here you find pictures, statuettes, a piano, a fire that is positively cheerful, and a kettle that sings in the corner of the grate—for there is something warming in perspective. Perhaps it is chess, or cards, or music, or story-telling; certainly it is the social pipe, and a few genial and wholesome hours that end too early. We are not always decorous in the Mont Blanc; there is a room on the top floor front that has known the wildest revels, and this too at the most unseasonable hours. I would gladly frown upon this thing and point a moral, though I am unskilled in that line, but I happen to have been one of the revelers. The South was entertaining the North with champagne and cigars one even-

ing ; from Maine to California there was the best possible feeling, and the South was, in turn, embraced by representatives from the proudest cities of our land. After our reconciliation, when the hour for story-telling had set in, and each in his turn was prepared to outdo his neighbor in a lively but generous spirit of rivalry, we were interrupted by the approach of heavy feet, and the opening and severe slamming of the door in the room next ours. He was a Frenchman, and it was his custom to put off his shoes five minutes after his entrance and dash them down in the hall with unnecessary and objectionable violence. Again he would crash his door and then retire to rest. This thing had been done too often in the dead of night, when the whole house was thrown into a state of alarm, to be any longer passed over in silence by the United States of America. We resolved that, if that Frenchman hurled his boots into the hall that night (or rather morning), he would do it at his peril. We held our breath to listen ; his door was suddenly clutched and thrown open ; the boots thundered on the hall floor ; the door was shut with a terrific report, and at that moment we howled in chorus. France and the United States are supposed to be on the best possible terms ; no doubt they are, over the river, but in the Latin Quarter, America will no longer endanger her tympanum by nightly permitting the violent explosion of French shoe-leather immedi-

ately under her ears. We flew into the long, waxed hall; impelled by patriotism and champagne we dashed those boots throughout the building, up stairs and down, out of windows into the court, and back again through space, skillfully caught on the fly by Chicago; up to the ceiling again and again, and then bowled over the shining floor, those boots did more duty in fifteen minutes than ever before since they were first pulled from the original last. And then, exhausted, beginning to find life a burden, and to fear that we had few if any friends in this world, in fact, suddenly realizing that we were perhaps all orphans, or deserved to be, we embraced madly and went shrieking to our several apartments. Our *concierge* the next day was not kindly disposed toward us. She took us each in turn, as we contributed our keys to the rack in her sentry-box, and reproached us bitterly. I saw Chicago, speechless but defiant, receiving the brunt of the abuse. It was emphasized with a long wand which was waved fiercely in the air, but there was no personal violence, nor the administration of anything more unpalatable than a torrent of French invective, strengthened with much offensive truth. Take the head of an india-rubber doll, apply your thumb and finger to either ear, compress the skull till your thumb and finger meet, and the eyes of the doll slide on to each side of the face, like the eyes of a fish, and you

have the very image of our *concierge* as she appeared the morning after the sacking of the house. Some of us left for our health ; we wanted quiet apartments where our friends would not be turned forth into the street with a smile and a lie.

II.

PARIS BY GASLIGHT.

HÔTEL DU MONT BLANC, RUE DE SEINE, PARIS.

OUR hotel is like a great boys' boarding-school. We from time to time smoke out our neighbors in the most playful manner. We occasionally indulge in a light engagement with pillows, robed in the brief garments of our sleep. We are not always sleepy, and perhaps would fain return again to citizens' dress, and go forth seeking the untimely veal pie, which is obtainable at a reduced rate owing to the lateness of the hour and the unfavorable symptoms already developing in the pie ; we sometimes do this, and at such times we find it a merciful relief from the tedious gayeties of the French capital ; but just now we are called into action by the bare-kneed battalion, heavily mounted, and all thoughts of pie are driven from our minds till after the heat of the engagement has subsided and there are signs of returning peace. This sort of thing doesn't hap-

pen every night; believe it not of us, for we are, after all, workers, and pretty hard ones, too. Not one of us but has ambition, not one but hopes to return to his distant home with a record that will gladden the hearts of those who have been hoping and praying for him all these months. We must have our recreation. Great Heaven! would you have us old before our time? Dull-hearted, stiff-jointed, sad-eyed things who have lost the faculty of enjoyment? Hence the medicinal properties of the *Boullier* are strongly urged, and we hie us with expectant steps to the gay halls where sin skips nimbly arm in arm with innocence and verdancy and the inquiring mind of the curious and the passive spirit of the traveling correspondent. Away beyond the lovely gardens of the Luxembourg, the gardens of our quarter, is the *Boullier*, with a dazzling array of gas-jets flaming over its façade. We fall in along the line of visitors besieging the ticket office, in our turn pay a franc admission, and the next moment find ourselves at the top of a broad flight of stairs leading into a gorgeous cellar. The decorations are Moorish or mongrel, I know not which; but they are sufficiently garish to suit the character of the place. In the center of the great hall is an oasis filled with musicians. They smoke, chat, lean over the railing with hats on the backs of their heads, and are quite indifferent to the opinion of any one present. Per-

haps they are right. Who cares for the opinion of any one here, though we ourselves are of the number? The time and the place annul all caution, pride, modesty—everything, in fact, save a desire to smoke and quench one's thirst and be jolly. A thousand lamps of every lovely tint swing from the painted ceiling, and the many arches supported by light columns are again and again repeated in the long mirrors that line the walls. At the end of the hall is a pretty artificial garden, with its grottoes and its pools of goldfish, its fountains, statues, and beds of lovely flowers; and everywhere there are small round tables thronged with men and women who do nothing but drink, drink, drink, and smoke and laugh boisterously.

Crash! the music has begun! There is a rush for the open spaces, where only is dancing possible; there is no director nor floor-manager, no method at all; every one looks out for himself or herself, and somehow out of the confusion a quadrille is formed in one corner, and then another and another, until there are a dozen of them well at work, or at play, which is it?—and by this time the first figure of the set is over. The spectators crowd close about the dancers, and are often troublesome. This is the kingdom of license, and you may say what you please to any one, dance with whom you choose, do what you like; in truth you are expected not to be stupid

when you come to the *Boullier*. As the dance progresses the interest increases, for the dancers become heated, and it is only at such times that the *can-can* is endurable. The shrill music crashes through the liveliest figure of the quadrille; we work our way into the crowd until we can stand on tip-toe and look over some one's shoulder. Before us are two couples, very young ones, but with strangely wise faces, worldly wise I mean, and with a kind of devilish grace in their every motion that fascinates you. They advance and recede with infinite swagger. They throw themselves suddenly into attitudes that defy description; as well attempt to picture in words the writhing of a tigress as she plays with her young; the voluptuous posing, the quivering of the supple limbs, the curving of the spine and the waving to and fro of the head, snake-like and full of cunning; the sly, soft crouching that indicate a premeditated spring. *Whoop là!* There you have it! The men—they are mere boys—dash their genteel beavers on to the napes of their necks, seize the skirts of their coats, and go through a series of gymnastic feats as ludicrous as they are ungraceful. The women—they are girls—switch up their skirts above the knee, and deliberately kick over the heads of their partners. Not satisfied with this display, one of them grasps her ankle with one hand and raises it above her head, where she waves her dainty boot to and fro, keep-

ing time to the music. The other turns a clumsy summersault and lands in the center of the open space, where she rests with her two feet pointing north and south, quite in the manner of a circus boy when he spreads his legs sideways like a pair of compasses, and this is hailed with delight by the spectators. There is nothing after that save a repetition of the same sort of ungraceful climax, and even the dancers seem to grow weary of it, for they seldom finish the last figure, but turn away and lose themselves in the crowd. Every alternate dance is a *can-can* quadrille, between which come waltzes, polkas, etc. It is in the waltz only that the dancers display the daring that alone makes the *Boullier* attractive or even interesting. Yet three times a week this hall is filled from 9 P. M. to midnight; the low gallery on three sides of it is always crowded with spectators, who sit at their tables with beer and cigars, and watch the dancers to the end. You will find every class of people at the *Boullier* and the other dance halls of Paris where the reputation of the dancers is dubious. English swells in monk-like ulsters sometimes have with them a fair companion (let us trust she is fair), who is closely veiled, who never for a moment quits his side, who is evidently shy and out of place, and is probably his bride. The American is there, feeling quite at home, and refusing to be astonished at anything Parisian.

We are there sometimes, many of us together; we look on at the same old dances, as danced by the same old dancers, who are mostly professionals hired for the occasion. We have learned to know the faces of many who go always to these halls; we can now point you to the best set of *can-can* dancers, who show infinite art and exquisite grace in their interpretation of this barbaric pantomime. We lounge about till the air has become utterly oppressive with the smoke and the heat and the hubbub. Late in the night there is nothing but riot; loud, meaningless laughter; the skipping to and fro of those who have but one desire left, and that is to create as much disturbance on as small a capital as possible. We withdraw while the room is still in a whirl, and the dancers at the farther end of the room float about in the thick smoke like ghosts; while the click of glasses and the screams of unnatural joy mingle and are lost in the deafening crash of the orchestra. Probably we go down the street arm in arm, singing the songs of home, such as "Silver Threads," "Senators, whar you goin'?" and other airs with which it is our delight to astonish the fat cabmen, those rosy fellows who line the street at the most unearthly hours, and who look all alike, with a likeness that is of nothing in heaven nor earth, nor the waters under the earth, but only of the sleepy, sleek, round, expressionless cabmen of Paris. Having aroused many sleepers

with the fierce rendering of favorite national airs, and attracted the attention of a brace of *gendarmes,* the handsomest and most elegant fellows in Paris, we come home to the Mont Blanc, ring up the night-watchman, who sleeps with a rope just over his head, and in his dream pulls the heavy lock on the outer door without waking; pushing in the swinging panel in the great door, the great door which is not opened till morning, we light our respective candles, take keys, and bid farewell to one another and to the frivolities of life in general, and go yawning to our beds.

III.

FROM THE LATIN QUARTER.

Hôtel du Mont Blanc, Rue de Seine, Paris.

For two months I seem to have been dashed from one extreme to another, through the widest range of experiences I have ever known in so brief a time in a single locality. The Latin Quarter is not in itself altogether lovely; the streets are tangled and narrow and unclean. The houses are mostly ugly. We have the fine church of St. Sulpice only a stone's throw distant, and close at hand is beautiful old St. Germain, the oldest and perhaps most picturesque church in Paris, with its frescoes by that devout Catholic artist, Hippo-

lyte Flandrin. Around the corner is the small house with the turret and the grated windows where Charlotte Corday dealt death to Marat; but the whole corner is being swept away to make room for newer and less interesting buildings. All up and down these streets there are shops where antique books, prints, and all manner of *bric-à-brac* may be bargained for. The Seine is lined with vendors of cheap literature; near St. Sulpice there is an inexhaustible store of sacred prints, medals, rosaries, and church furniture. Indeed, you can get almost anything you wish on our side of the river, and you will get it for half the price that is demanded on the Rue de Rivoli. It is not this alone which makes the Quarter a desirable residence for a student of limited means; here he can live as he sees fit and no man shall say him yea or nay.

See how my days have passed in Paris, and tell me if they be not full of experience. After my coffee, which I too often take quite alone, I hasten to the bedside of a friend lying dangerously ill in a convent at the other end of the city. Her illness, her fatal illness, alone gains me admission into the seclusion of this serene retreat. For one hour—having been admitted through the ponderous gates into a garden where the statue of the Madonna, now packed in straw to protect it against the frosts, is covered with shivering birds, who cling to it for a little warmth—having found

my friend better or worse, as the case may be, for one hour I know the impressive silence of the sick-chamber, and know also the companionship of those low-voiced sisters, whose lives are sealed to suffering and death. When my visitation is over, I find that I am booked for breakfast with that capital fellow, the author of "My Paris," when I am sure of absorbing something of his exhilarating atmosphere. Having quitted his chambers with a freshly-lit cigar, I return to work. Or, if I am out of working humor, there is the studio of a young marine painter, of Philadelphia, away up in a splendid old abbey, where at night the rustle of silk is heard and muttering voices, where shadowy forms float about in the moonlight. What a strange, unwritten history that abbey must have! Just now Philadelphia's unrivaled collection of pipes interests us more deeply, and we smoke, and dream of his moonlit seas and wild bits of windy coast, and talk largely of the Centennial. Or, it may be, I find my way to California's den, decorated with studies that range from Shasta to the sea.

In the intervals 'twixt my early visit and my late revisit to the chamber of sorrow and suffering, many little events occur; too many to be recorded, and too uneventful, most of them, to be worth recording. Often I have turned in at the Morgue, and found it usually the favorite resort of very small children; boys and girls running on

errands make it convenient to look in at the discolored bodies stretched stark and stiff under the water-spout, with a great horror settled on their faces. Peace comes not to these suicides and these victims of hunger and rage. Even under the shadow of Notre Dame, almost within the glow of the tapers that flicker before the altar of our Blessed Lady of Victories, they lie there, the forsaken victims of hopeless defeat. Again and again I turn to seek consolation by the domestic hearth of San Francisco friends, where I am sure of a welcome and a dinner of home dishes, such as are as good for the heart-hungry as for those whose cravings are more carnal. There is one restaurant where we boys resort to restore our souls at an extravagant figure. The American patriot and the pancake are inseparable; misery and mince-pie can not dwell under the same roof. We are, for the time being, happy and patriotic to the last degree. What shall I say of the chaste retreat, the dainty drawing-room, done up in the Louis XIV style, with its variegated upholstery, its cupids, its clocks, its screens, and the thousand and one bits of finery that make the whole look like a big play-house? Here I meet old friends, and we live over again the California days.

Writing of extremes, I think of my Latin-Quarter attic, dingy, cheerless, drafty, and I turn from it to the palace of Monte Cristo, just for the novelty of the change. Last winter in Venice

the Egyptian steamer brought an addition to our small foreign colony. Coming, as he did, fresh from Egypt, where his life had been a kind of dream, an episode in an Arabian night, we were drawn to one another intuitively; and when, after a few days, he left Venice, I thought it more than likely that we should not meet again. But who shall say what is not possible in Paris? One friend in her convent passing away in the midst of perpetual prayers and entreaties; but a few blocks distant another friend waiting to welcome me. The latter had been home; had flown hither and thither in search of health and rest; was back again in Paris, and hard at work. I was shown to his reception-room, in a house hidden away in one of those cloister-like inclosures called a *cité*. Monte Cristo was at home, and came forward to greet me in his fez. Turkish tapestries covered the four walls; Arabian rugs lay on the floor, lapped one over the other; Persian lanterns of stained glass hung from the ceiling, and threw an enchanting light over the scene; the windows and the doors were entirely hidden by rich draperies; the mirror above the mantel was obscured by clusters of Eastern palms—baby palms in porcelain cradles, but lusty and vigorous palms for all that. One side of the room was filled with a deep divan of satin and silk, heaped with cushions and embroidered coverings. The center-table was one monument of mellow-tinted,

thick-crusted silk embroidery—antique, camphorated, beautiful for ever. Venetian and Egyptian studies were heaped about the room, and a thousand dainty ornaments were displayed. A bazaar of Cairo is not more tantalizing than this artistic bachelor-haunt. What if we sat after dinner curled up on the divan and smoked the nargileh, and then, like children decked in the sumptuous finery of the far East, burnt pastils and dreamed dreams and played at being weary of life, and wondered what pyramid should hold our embalmed dust when we had at last smoked ourselves to death? Coffee came in its own good time, and in cups of such exquisite workmanship that, but for the richly-fretted network of gold that encased the fragile porcelain shells, they must have been crushed in the fingers. Oh! but that is the royal road to success!

My friend has passed from earth; almost alone in this great city. Death and separation imminent have cast a shadow over the last few days. The boys are going home; some of them for good, others to return anon; but I know the old place will never be quite the same. No more private dinners in L.'s room; no silver flutings from the lips of F. F., of Winona; no festive nights at the chambers in the Mont Blanc; even D. will have gone home to build up his native city and his reputation at one and the same time. And he whom we have looked upon as a model of all

the virtues, yet whose buff overcoat we were sure to see at the *Boullier* when least expected, it may be he will lose his good name and become virtuous in very truth. Dublin will have grown serious, and Pard gay; in fact, we won't any of us know the other in a very brief season, the more's the pity. Inasmuch as we all fully realize this, we have been rushing to and fro with albums, gathering autographic sketches in memory of the time. Some of these are exceedingly fine, and all are just the sort of reminders that will by and by make the heart beat a little faster when we turn the leaves and know the fate that is in store for each of us. I can not reproduce for you the sketches, but you shall have some lines I am permitted to copy; they will show you the spirit that pervades the Quarter, for they are out of one of the albums I have referred to. They are called

AT PARTING.

Only a page in your book
Along with the other fellows;
I hate to stop out in the cold, dear Lin,
Cut off with the "sears" and the "yellows."

Only a scratch of my pen,
That stumbles even in starting,
For I can't say half of the things I feel
As I cling to your hand at parting.

Only a dinner or two
In a warm, cozy corner that *we* know;

Only a smoke with the rest of the boys,
Or a night at the Valentino!

Only a meeting by chance,
And a parting—by Jove! yet not only—
Again I shall think of them all, and again,
In the hours that are sure to be lonely.

Only a jingle of rhymes
For the sake of the days that are over—
The days that shall live in the happiest dreams
That lighten the heart of a rover!

That is the end of it all! Without one farewell, taking my last dinner quite alone, so as to save myself the pain of parting, I sprang into a carriage and fled to the Lyons station. It was a long, cold drive. I thought of a thousand things, but I didn't think that my flight would be discovered, and that at that moment there was a carriage in the rear tearing after me! They caught me, some of those dear fellows, just as I was being hurried away by the guard. One swift, manly embrace, a grip of the hand that made my blood tingle, a last look into the brave, earnest faces I have grown so used to, and the next moment I was rushing out of the bracing bitterness of the Paris winter, flying southward in the track of the swallows.

IV.

MARSEILLES.

VENICE, Genoa, and Marseilles, how the golden wave of commerce that rolls in from the Orient has heaped their thresholds with rich and splendid freights! They are much alike, these storehouses of gums and spices, and cloths of gold and camel's hair. Under my window in Marseilles, a window that opens upon the great harbor, and looks up to the church of Notre Dame de la Garde, on its holy hill, under my window I hear all the tongues of Babel, and see all the costumes of the earth mixing hourly in the carnival of this seaport life. There are proud Moors who stalk by with the stateliness of Salvini in *Othello;* the Spaniard and the East Indian go hand in hand; the Turk, the Italian, and the Dane hobnob with the Yankee skipper, who indulges in a little French when opportunity offers, but it is the execrable French of South France, and suffers a sad change in the lips of the skipper, which puts it quite beyond the interpretation of the most ingenious linguist. Just below the hotel there is an entertainment loudly heralded by a trumpeter as black as a burnt cork. You enter the harem by the polite invitation of a portly gentleman in a fez and scarlet "bloomers";

within there is a divan on which reclines a lovely but expressionless creature, who smokes the long-stemmed water-pipe of her country, and makes enormous eyes at you. Two or three sleepy fellows sit about, and look excessively bored; they are the vigilant guardians of the seraglio. Half a watch of sailors, a soldier, a Spanish merchant, and myself stand in a row and look blandly on. The houri yawns and smiles; the eunuchs nod and grin; we of the audience turn to one another, burst into a smothered laugh, and withdraw in a body, leaving two sous each with the Pacha, who thanks us in Italian. The bazaars are open all along the quay, and small cargoes of stuffs from foreign ports are bid off rapidly at auction in the very midst of the pavement.

It is spring weather in January; the doors and windows are flung wide open; the Tivoli Gardens at the end of the charming Prado, an avenue that must be a perpetual benediction in the heat of midsummer, are all in blossom, and the fountain that glorifies the handsome and rather eccentric-looking *Musée de Longchamp* doesn't chill you with its spray, even in midwinter. Only to think that we are but sixteen hours from Paris, where they are skating in the *Bois* and throwing cinders on the street to keep the horses from falling! At the *Musée* the two wings of the building, or rather the two buildings, are connected by a stately colonnade, and a large fountain or water-

fall gushes from the midst thereof. You stand at the foot of the long stairs and look up at this fountain ; then you ascend a little way and glance across it ; after that you beam down from the colonnade upon the torrent of water under you, and hear its roar all about you, and meet scores of people, who are doing the fountain, like yourself, full of wonder and delight. The canvases that have been immortalized by Perugino, Rubens, Van Dyck, and Holbein are not to be thought of until the great fountain has been duly admired ; in truth, I fancy that most of us prefer lounging about among the Ionic columns that spring from beds of lilies and water-plants to studying the master works within. Marseilles is so lively and so fresh looking that you would never for a moment suspect it of having a history. Paris or Vienna might easily absorb much of the city, and you would not detect any material difference in the aspect or the atmosphere of either. Yet *Massilia* was six hundred years of age when Christ came into the world. Agricola went to boarding-school in Marseilles, for in those days it was quite as Greek as Athens, and perhaps Agricola's father thought it a trifle ahead of the latter. You know Tacitus married into the family and recorded this fact. There was a Temple of Diana on the site of the present cathedral, and Neptune and Apollo were worshiped on the coast. Leaning over the fine terrace in front of the cathedral—it is not

yet completed—I thought of this, and, while I was dreaming there, a regiment of swarthy Zouaves came ashore from a ship just in from Africa. They were the most gorgeous specimens of color imaginable; bronzed faces; drooping, amber-tinted mustaches faded in the sun; little scarlet caps on the very back of their head, with long tassels dangling below the shoulders, and jackets, baggy trousers, cloaks, and scarfs that blended the mellowest shades of a tropical sunset. They moved along the quay and passed silently into one of the great forts that are perched about the rocky harbor. And what a harbor it is! Twenty thousand vessels enter and quit it annually; the great stone docks that line one side of it are like a series of reception-rooms with folding doors between them in the shape of draw-bridges. When the proposed additions are completed, for there is still a demand for sea-lodgings at Marseilles, this will be the largest harbor in the world. Notwitstanding its age, the only trace of antiquity now in tolerable preservation at Marseilles is the church of St. Victor, where Pope Urban V was once abbot. I mistook it for a fort, walked twice around it before I found an entrance, and then supposed I was going into the crypt, but arrived, after several turns, in the nave that had sheltered the devout for nearly seven centuries. At the top of that holy hill stands Notre Dame de la Garde. Various paths wind up the rocky slopes;

but at last the ascent is so steep that long flights of steps land you at the entrance of the church. It is a church within a fort; there is a moat about it; you cross a small bridge that can be withdrawn, and thus isolate that sacred edifice. The way is lined with little booths, where rosaries and souvenirs are sold. The keepers of the booths hail you as you toil up the hill. Within the church there are hundreds of those pathetic, yet often ludicrous votive pictures recording the deliverance from evil of all sorts of sinners. In one corner of the picture, the apparition of "Notre Dame de la Garde" is sure to be inserted, looking very much like a postage-stamp. There are miniature ships suspended from the ceiling like great spiders; ships that have beguiled the tedious hours of sailors whose escape from watery graves has filled their hearts with gratitude that finds this touching and ingenuous expression. All day the paths to the chapel of Our Lady are thronged with pilgrims. What an hour of rest one gets there, above the busy and noisy town, looking off upon the sea dotted with islands and fringed with jutting capes. The clouds seem to lean down upon it, fair sails fade away on the horizon, the river trails a dark curtain across the middle distance, the sun breaks through a rift in the cloud and touches the dark waves with flame. These little islands at the entrance to the harbor, though they are as bare as chalk, are not with-

out interest. It was at the Château d'If, a gloomy prison, that Mirabeau was confined ; and to-day, if you were to take one of the hundred boats that lie at the quay, with a boatman crying the "Château d'If" as long as you were within hearing, you would be gravely shown into the cell of "Monte Cristo," as I was, and perhaps it would interest you more than anything else in the premises. . . .

Steamer "Byzantine," off Marseilles.

First Day.—We are off at last ; about us are the hideous cliffs of the harbor, that seem to stand open like jaws set thick with fangs. There is a heavy swell in the channel near the islands, and we have just shipped a big sea, that has washed us all into the cabin like so many drowned flies. The great golden statue of Notre Dame de la Garde flashes from the tower-top on Holy Hill. Long after we have lost sight of Marseilles, and when the sea begins to spread itself between us and the shore, we can still observe the faint glow of Notre Dame, and the sight of it is a consolation, for it is our last glimpse of France.

Second Day.—Nearly run down little Corsica this morning. Why will these islands persist in getting in the way of Oriental steamers ? Were obliged to turn out for Corsica. Small as she is, we are even smaller, and then she is an-

chored, and we are not. There is a kind of etiquette to be observed, though we are neither in the heavens above nor the earth beneath! Have been hugging Sardinia in the most disgraceful manner all day long, but Sardinia does not seem to care a continental. Are very near the shore; deep valleys open to us, and we see grand, misty mountains in the distance; the Sardinian silhouette at sunset is as irregular as the profile of a horned toad. Just nodded to Caprera as we passed; one of the officers pointed out a little spot in the hills, and said it was "La Casa di Garibaldi." We looked intently at it until we rounded a point and spoke a fishing-smack full of Sardines or Sardinians—what would you call the inhabitants of that island? I mean those that have been pretty thoroughly salted.

THIRD DAY.—Passed a bit of land in the night with nothing but a light-house to distinguish it from the darkness; saw the blue cloud called Sicily floating on the tip-top of the horizon, just as we all went below to our French breakfast. When coffee and cigarettes were over, the cloud had vanished. Spoke an Italian steamer that was so excessively small the passengers on the flush deck looked like Colossi. There is nothing to do but haul up to Malta at our earliest convenience. I don't see why so much has been written about the horrors of the Mediterranean Sea! The weather is delicious; the air balmy; the table

well supplied. The only objectionable feature of the passage, so far, is a Turk, who coughs in the pit of his stomach. When that Turk gets up at night to cough, you would mistake him for a bladder of dried peas being violently shaken.

V.

MALTA.

All day we plowed an ugly sea, slowly working our way toward Malta. I knew that Sicily was but sixty miles away from Malta and took hope, though St. Paul had a rough time of it in these waters and came to shore on the little island in anything but ship-shape. Toward twilight, before the sun was fairly down, we were all astir on board. Some one had kindly raised land on our larboard bow, and though it was poor land to look at, and might have passed for a big turtle asleep on the waters, we accepted it and began to congratulate ourselves that we should ride at anchor that night, and take breakfast right side up instead of horizontally, as was the case only a few hours before. Malta is certainly an unlovely island. It is quite the fashion to speak lightly of its soil, there is so little of it; and to call the water brackish, and to wonder why there are three little islands in the group, when one of

that sort would be sufficient to satisfy any reasonable soul. The Maltese on board are indignant, and point out its celebrated resorts and speak with enthusiasm of its charming climate. It lies half way between Italy and Africa. It is better than either in many respects, they who dwell on this lonely rock think, which means, in reality, that it is neither the one thing nor the other. As we draw in nearer the shore, a fellow passenger, who has made Malta his home for many years, grows jubilant, and seizes me by the arm to tell me the old story of St. Paul's wreck. "There is the very spot," says he, "and many a picnic have I enjoyed in the cove under the hill." Sure enough, there it all was, "a certain creek with a shore," and on the cliff above the shore a colossal statue of the saint, just distinguishable in the twilight—a great white figure like a ghost, brooding over the fretful sea. It was undoubtedly a favorable season for refreshing one's memory of that notable shipwreck, and in half an hour no fewer than five versions of the wreck were given in as many languages by men who spoke as if they had been eye-witnesses of the scene. We recalled how St. Paul was shipped to Italy, how he touched at Sidon, and how "Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go with his friends and refresh himself." How, afterward, they sailed under Cyprus, and over the Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and came to Lysia. How they

cruised by Cnidus and Crete, and the Fair Havens, and then the prophetic lips foretold the danger that lay in store. But the old salts of those days had as little confidence in landsmen as in this hour, and "when the south wind blew softly" they loosened sail and bore down under the shores of Crete. It was a bad move, for Euroclydon, a tempestuous wind, caught them, and they could not bear up against it. For many days neither sun nor stars appeared, and the ship was driven up and down in the raging sea. They lightened the storm-bound bark, they ungirded her, they "strake sail"; with their own hands they threw out the tackling of the ship, and then yielded to their fate. Again the saint was moved to prophecy, and he had them this time. "You should have stayed at Crete," said he; "yet fear not, for no man among you shall be lost, only but the ship." They came to a land which they knew not, after fourteen days of unutterable misery. It was midnight, and very cold. They sounded, and found that it was twenty fathoms; again they sounded, and found it was fifteen fathoms, and then they threw four anchors out of the stern, and "wished for day." The saint was, after all, the best seaman of the lot, for without him that company could not have got safely to shore. In the morning they took up their anchors, made sail and drove their bow right into the sandy beach, and the ship went to pieces, and every one of the

two hundred three score and sixteen souls set foot on Malta without stopping to consider the beauty or the barrenness of the island at the moment. My Maltese friend assures me that the snakes in Malta, and there are plenty of them, are all perfectly harmless, and that this has been the case ever since St. Paul shook the viper from his hand into the fire, on the bank yonder, the morning after the wreck. When I had come to the end of my sojourn in Malta, and was thinking of the chief point of interest on the sixty monotonous miles of coast, my eye chanced to fall upon this paragraph, in a small history of the island that lay open before me :

"St. Paul's Bay is now a watering-place, where many of the inhabitants pass the summer months."

Half an hour's ride from St. Paul's watering-place is the grotto of Calypso. Could Homer have ever seen it, or was he born blind that he sang of the spot in a strain that ought to increase emigration to Malta? It is now celebrated for the enormous quantities of sandwiches and soda-water consumed on the premises, and there is not a line of Homer discernible as far as eye can see. It is after sunset when we steam into the harbor of Valetta and let go our anchor. Half an hour before, we rolled up under the low cliffs of the island, finding it difficult to focus any given object, but now we lie as still as a picture in the deep,

quiet waters, only a stone's throw from shore. All about us tower the hills that are literally clothed with fortifications. The city stands on end, with one house beginning where another leaves off, so that you can see nothing but windows and roofs stretching from the water's edge to the very sky. There are hanging gardens, tier upon tier, that carefully hide all traces of verdure, and you don't know they are green and lovely gardens until you wander about the town, climbing hither and thither, and suddenly find yourself in one of them. The house windows are mostly pushed out over the narrow streets, like small balconies enclosed in glass, and dark blinds give them a tropical appearance that reminds us that we are not far from the African coast.

The harbor, a mile and a half long, and nearly land-locked, is alive with small Maltese boats, that curl over at the stem and stern as if the boat-builder had taken the superfluous ends of the little craft and made a "beau-catcher" for ornament. Great ships swing near us at anchor. There are singers floating to and fro, and hailing us between the stanzas with an invitation to shore. Even the voices from the quays are distinctly audible, and, but for the gibberish, the Maltese dialect, which seems to be a mixture of Arabic and Italian, we might pass an hour in trying to catch a phrase, and learn the gossip of Malta. A thousand lights twinkle on the hills. We seem to

be in the midst of a vast amphitheatre on a festa night, and this is entertainment enough for the present. We learn that the opera-house is burned, that the cafés are dull, that there is nothing else worth mentioning in the shape of amusements save an Italian melodrama, so we stop on board for the night—I mean those of us who are only touching at Malta on our way to Alexandria. The Maltese have deserted us. There was infinite trouble in getting ashore, though the Custom-house officers never molest you at this port. The boatmen positively fought for custom; even the smallest passenger is a godsend to these poor fellows, who seem to be famishing, and no wonder. Malta, for its size, contains a denser population than any other port of the habitable globe. This rocky oasis in the sea has been the scene of repeated conflicts from the days of the Phœnicians down to the beginning of this century, when it passed quietly into the hands of the British, and has rejoiced in shapely officers with short red coats and sturdy Highlanders with bare legs ever since. But only while Malta was the island kingdom of the Knights of St. John has romance succeeded in throwing a spell over it. The Greeks, Romans, Goths, Arabs, and their successors seemed eager to get possession of the island, that they might thus prevent their neighbors from gaining a foothold there. They have all, or nearly all, left traces of their seed in this stony

soil. The costumes of a carnival are daily aired in the high gardens of Valetta, and the tongues of Babel confuse the ear in the steep streets of the city. While the boatmen are singing in the starlight, I fumble through the leaves of my pocket-copy of "The Historical Guide to Malta," printed on the premises, and there get a glimpse of the songs of the people, and find them extremely poor. The melody is bad enough, but the poetry is worse. Here is a specimen of their sentiment, a song at parting:

Beloved, I am about to leave you,
I sigh that I take you not with me;
May God give you new resignation,
And preserve you secure in my love.

And preserve you secure in my love,
That you ever remember me;
Remember I always have loved you,
Since the time I was but an infant.

Since the time I was but an infant,
My heart has always been drawn to you;
And I can walk in no other light
But the light of your beautiful eyes.

In the light of your beautiful eyes
I have always directed my steps.

* * * * * * *

And so on for several stanzas, in each of which the last line of the preceding stanza is repeated and added to. The following naïve verses are

thought to be a tolerable specimen of the songs popular among the common people:

Would you know what a maiden does
From morning until evening?
She adorns her head with curls,
And seats herself in the balcony.

She seats herself in the balcony,
And sets about making love;
When she sees her mother coming,
She begins hemming her handkerchief.

The young man walks up and down,
To see if the old woman is there.
He traverses the street from one end to the other.
He meets with an old grandmother,
And says, "Woman, will you help me?
I care nothing about money,
So as that you are able to serve me."

In the song, the marriage is proposed but comes to naught, for the young woman in the balcony is evidently a flirt. Fancy these songs droned monotonously to the accompaniment of the bagpipes and tambourine.

At daybreak the following morning we were surrounded by barges full of goods to be shipped, and barges empty, awaiting such freight as we had brought to Malta; the engines were at work hoisting out bales and boxes, and, with this din of commerce in my ears, I hastened on shore to see the town.

It is pretty enough as it spreads over the hills; you cross a drawbridge and go under an arch in the natural rock, near the water, and thus you enter Valetta. The streets are picturesque; some of them are like long flights of stairs, with the houses on each side of them like larger steps, one above another. Cascades of people are continually tumbling down these stairs, or sitting in eddies on the way, knitting, chatting, smoking. Statues of saints are at the street corners, with lamps burning before them. Your guide tells you a thousand things of the town and the people that interest you very little. One fact is evident—there are more hands eager for work, more mouths hungry for food than the market is able to satisfy. The guide thinks I must be deeply interested in the Governor's palace, and therefore turns me over to the pompous butler, who drawls out his tiresome descriptive text as we two wander through the rather fine apartments. We see coats of mail worn by the Knights of Malta in the glorious days of that Order, and cross-bows, javelins, battle-axes, and the usual curios of an armory. There is a cannon here five feet long, three inch caliber, made of tarred rope bound round a thin lining of copper, and covered on the outside with a coating of plaster painted black. It was captured from the Turks during one of their attacks on the city of Rhodes. Some of the old auberges of the Knights are still standing. These were the pal-

aces or inns for each nationality, where the members, whether knights, serving brothers, professors, or novices, used to live. Those that have not given place to the more modern buildings are now used for Government offices of one sort or another. How soon we exhausted the town! There is really nothing special to be seen but the great church of St. John.

It was built about 1576 by Grand Master La Cassière, and was enriched by his successors. The pavement is composed of sepulchral slabs worked in a mosaic of jasper, agate, and other precious stones. Many a knight sleeps under these splendid floors, with a panegyric flattering him in death. Every nation had, and has still, its separate chapel, running parallel with the nave, and here the Grand Masters are inurned in sumptuous state. The Portuguese knights, the Spanish, Austrian, Italian, French, Bavarian, and English have each decorated their chapels and their altars after their own hearts. In the English chapel is one old statue of wood, representing St. John. It was the custom of the Knights to assemble before this statue and implore victory on the eve of their national engagements. In the crypt lie the remains of L'Isle Adam, first commander of the Order in Malta, together with those of many others more or less famous. But for the sacrifice of the mass at the high altar, the worshipers, the faint odor of incense that pervaded the great church, I

fear the splendid mockery of the monumental marble would have chilled me; the history of three centuries of glory and greatness is all that is left in the knightly island; a history, and nothing more. From the high gardens over the sea I looked down upon the waves that stretched between me and the horizon, and thought of the distant shore I was seeking, a shore whereon so brief a history as this of the Knights of Malta would seem like writing in the sand. I grew impatient at our delay, and found the venders of fretted silver a burden, and the songs of the boat-boys a bore. Moreover, what if the climate should veer, as it does sometimes? The winter is penetrating, says my history, and the summer is one long sirocco. Do you know what that is? What says the historian? "Strangers in Malta are affected, during the prevalence of the sirocco, with great lassitude and debility, which indisposes their system, and renders it liable to suffer from dyspepsia. . . . Anything painted when this wind blows will never set well; glue loses much of its adhesive property; bright metals become tarnished; and, from the dampness of the atmosphere, the pavement of the street is sometimes quite wet." Good heavens! Let us quit Malta before our "glue loses its adhesive property," or we go to pieces.

VI.

ALEXANDRIA.

THE sea wind fell toward daybreak and the sea followed shortly after. A soft gale came out of the east with the sun and blew off shore. What a very soft gale it was! warm and dry, bearing the faintest possible odor of musk along with it, and stealing, apparently, from the heart of a great yellow cloud that was slowly rising under the sun. I wondered if it was the steam of aloes, the sort of thing you read of, but seldom witness; it was not the smoke of a burnt-offering, nor any sun-painted cloud, but only desert dust swept up and wafted away on the fresh breeze of the morning. The blue waves turned pale, and broke into long lines of flashing foam as they crept to shore; beyond the foam rose a white city, like a reef built out of the sea; a few palms leaned over its shining walls, a few domes hung like great ostrich eggs under those leaning palms; a few slender minarets, tall tapers with crescents flaming at their tips, towered here and there, the loftiest objects in all that dazzling horizon. A strange sail came leaping over the waves to give us welcome; I heard unfamiliar voices, and received a confused impression of color, orange and scarlet and bronze, draped and turbaned somebodies doing something

for our benefit as we steamed on toward the splendid port.

Islands with palaces, blinded to the eaves and filled with invisible slaves, a lighthouse, and a harbor crowded with shipping—all these sprang suddenly before us out of the blank sea, too suddenly for me to fully comprehend them. We were shortly surrounded by a great multitude of boatmen. They fastened to our ship like leeches, and scaled our bulwarks. They swarmed on us, those plagues of Egypt, men and boys of every sort save only the right sort. We were boarded and taken by storm. Your sea pirates do this sort of thing and are hanged for it, but in Alexandria the rope's end scatters them for a moment only, and they return afresh. I retreated into the cabin, where they cornered me, prostrate and speechless, under the hail of their deep, delicious lingo. Click! click! down went the anchor into the soft beds of Egyptian mud, and at last we came to a dead halt in the classical waters of Proteus. I was in the cabin in mine extremity. Most of the pirates spoke a line of English, and each claimed me as his own. I was seized bodily and torn from the arms of an agile Greek to be folded in the embraces of a dusky Arab. They might have parted my garments among them; they nearly did. They might have drawn and quartered me and taken me on shore in sections, but I cried aloud in that

last hour, "Save me, Hubert, save me!" and the saving Hubert came to the front. I fell upon his neck, bag and baggage, and put all my trust in him. He was not a Greek, and that was something in his favor; he was an Italian, and that was considerably more, for I had had dealings with his people, and knew their ways. "Don't believe him!" said a rival. "He lies!" added a second. "He will cheat you!"

"We all cheat," chimed the chorus of forty thieves. Every mouth was set against him, and my heart sank. Then Hubert spoke in the honeyed tongue of his country, "Believe no one, but follow me!" I followed him in the wildest unbelief, and was carried to shore under the very shadow of his protecting arm. He lashed the fellows that beset our path to right and left; abused the boatman; scoffed at the officials who received us at the quay; took possession of a carriage and span, and piloted me to a French inn, apart from the Frank quarter, where all the squalid splendor of the Ottoman East was to be enjoyed at the lowest possible figure. Wine and figs restored me; my hostess, with her hair down and her feet in yellow slippers, talked of Paris with a sigh that was tinctured with absinthe and cigarettes. I heard the songs of the sellers of sweetmeats under my window; I saw all the pageant of the streets, and scented the holy and unholy smells that continually freight the air.

It was passing strange, and, unable to resist the charm of it, I went forth to glut my senses. Hubert clung to me like a brother, like a big brother who bullies you fraternally, and turns his devotion to profit.

"What will you see?" asked Hubert.

"See? I will see the four thousand palaces and the like number of baths; superb Serapis on its pyramid of a hundred steps; the Gymnasium, the Hippodrome, and Cleopatra's Hall of Revels; afterward take me to the pinnacle of the Panium, that I may view the city of five hundred thousand souls, and its fifteen miles of wall, with Necropolis by the sea below it, and Pharos in the waves beyond! Show me Hypatia's home!"

Hubert said nothing, but passed the word to the black driver in a scarlet fez with a blue tassel, and we rocked from side to side through narrow, crooked streets, as unsuitable for the purposes of commerce as plowed soil frozen hard.

I was dragged from point to point through all the city; then out of it into the hills of sand where the brown-leaved date palms stood stiffly against the wind; the cactus bristled by the roadside; small caravans of camels, with Nubian drivers, appeared and disappeared among the desert gullies; diminutive donkeys, burdened with riders who were, for the most part, ridiculously out of proportion, ambled over the beaten ways, urged on by barelegged boys with cries and cudg-

els; pilgrims, swathed in many-colored garments; carriages filled with Franks, more camels, other donkeys and Frank-laden carriages—this was the breathing panorama of the day. In all the city that has been glorious we found no remaining traces of its glory. Of the twelve thousand gardens that once delighted its luxurious people, a single substitute offers its trim lawns to the health-seeking Frank, with a caution to pluck nothing within the railings, and to keep off the grass! On the crown of a low hill stands the solitary column that perpetuates the fame of Pompey, though it was erected in honor of Diocletian. In the sand by the seashore the obelisk that marks the site of the Cæsarium towers alone, for its companion, long since fallen and hidden away under sand drifts, buried by the kindly winds, has been dragged through the vext seas to England. It is the so-called Needle of Cleopatra;* near it lay the dust of the Ptolemies and of Alexander. The meanest quarter of his city has crept down upon his tomb and obliterated it. The garden of Moharram Bey was to a certain extent a bore; the thick shade of the banyan, where I sought to collect my shattered senses, gave providential shelter to Egyptian florists, who stole upon me in the fragrant silence and assaulted me with button-

* Since this was written it has been transported to New York.

hole bouquets. Was I not Americano, and their legitimate prey?

Hubert was in league with them; Hubert beguiled me into one snare or another every hour, and in each case it was quite impossible to extricate myself without his aid. Hubert kept one hand on his heart, the picture of fidelity, and the other in my pocket. This is one of the customs of the East not set forth in the "Arabian Nights." We drove by the side of still canals where barges swung at anchor or drifted lazily with sails half-filled. We saw all the fashions of the Empire displayed along the shore. Alexandria turned out to take the sun at his setting, to listen to the strains of music under the palms, to nod sleepily to one's friends from the luxurious cushions heaped in the phaetons brought over sea from England. Then we hastened back to town and haggled with the man in the fez, Hubert and I, and got rid of his establishment, poor as it was, and decrepit and threadbare, with infinite pains. I was covered with humiliation, and sought to drown my disappointment in a tolerable brand of French claret. My dream of the Orient—how well that sounds—was dreamed out. This was not the Orient I longed for all my days and nights—a perfumed paradise, founded on the bewitching pages of Eothen and the Howadji. And yet everything that I saw—and I was continually seeing something—every object was

exactly as I expected it to be, and I lost all hope of receiving a sensation.

Twenty minutes on shore made this fact clear to me. I lounged into a café toward bedtime, resolving to be as comfortable as most foreigners are who are cast alone among strangers, and heard the perambulating organs that grind upon the heels of civilization, and tease the ear of him who listens for the angelic harmony of silence, even though he fly to the desert in the vain search for it. The organ droned out an Egyptian air from "Aïda" in the neighboring café—every third house is the haunt of coffee-bibbers—close at hand reed flutes were being blown by Egyptian lips and fingered skillfully by untrained Egyptian fingers, and I must confess that, clever as Verdi's imitation is, it is not so pleasing as the rustic, fantastic, fanatical melodies that these dark minstrels charm out of their reeds. The first sweet sleep of night was forcibly broken by a series of catcalls that filled me with astonishment and alarm. I rose from dreams in a frame of mind by no means worthy to be classed with those of the distinguished Indian lover. Some one in the shadow under my casement was hooting at intervals; perhaps he learned his cry from an Eastern nightbird unclassified in natural history; possibly it was an invention of his own. I know from experience and close study that his voice sprang out of the silence into a high and prolonged falsetto,

and, having nearly exhausted itself on the chief note, it concluded with a brief flourish that seemed to vary from time to time, and was no doubt indicative of the mood of the screamer. His breath passed from him with such emphasis that for a moment the silence was intensified, and then he seemed to recover with an audible gulp and to set at once to the accumulation of strength for the second cry which was sure to follow shortly. The serenader under my window usually first sounded his clarion note as if he were merely announcing his presence.

A few dogs barked in the distance. Some one moved stealthily by on the other side of the street, and then all was still again. Once more the cry ascended from the pavement, but this time there was a touch of impatience in it, and the concluding flourish was sharpened to a point. Anon the cry was repeated afar off; it was not unlike an echo, yet some kind of intelligence seemed to be conveyed over the town in the peculiar emphasis which was given it. Now my particular nightingale flew into the air with a triumphant peal; echo at once responded, and seemed to be drawing nearer every moment. At last they met, these two clamorous birds of night, and, as they passed under the faint ray of a street-lamp that swung from a shed over the way, I saw that they wore the impressive livery of the *gendarmes* of the East. The mystery was solved; they were

the night police, and, as the whole race is given to much sleeping, it becomes necessary for these watchful ministers of the public peace to keep one another and themselves awake by shrieking over the roofs from time to time. I grew familiar with that cry in all its infinite variations. I have heard my neighbor get wrathful because his challenge was unanswered, and he knew that the other fellow was sound asleep. I have listened to the more distant call twice or thrice repeated in various degrees of indignation, yet all the while my watchman reposed peacefully. When he awoke, which he did ultimately—for who shall be suffered to dream out his dream in the teeth of these thief-frighteners ?—he shook off his drowsiness, and responded with such vigor that there was conscious guilt betrayed in the very tone of his voice. I began with hating and scorning, but I ended by loving these gentle caterwaulers.

We were all of us restless. Often I should have enjoyed shrieking myself, but I was not in voice ; they entertained me, and their changeful moods were a perpetual study. Sometimes three or four of them lifted up their voices in concert, and the town seemed alive with them ; sometimes a whole hour would pass in absolute silence, and I knew that they were all asleep, and was glad for their sakes, and for the sakes of all parties concerned, that it was as it was. Again and again has the voice of my watcher sought to make

itself audible when the effort was only half successful, for the cry was swallowed up in a sigh, and no one heard it but myself—and I wasn't going to tell. I have known him to utilize a yawn and try to pass it for the genuine article, but he usually failed in this effort. Sometimes he dreamed, and made a hideous attempt to arouse his comrade in the next block. It was like the utterances of those who talk in their sleep, the unintelligible mouthings of an idiot, or the vague and rapid mutterings of one insane. That was the sort of thing that shook the nerves of Lady Macbeth, and I was happier when the old fellow under the window came suddenly to the surface with a startled but defiant *crow* that seemed the herald of the new-born day. A second day's wanderings among the streets of Alexandria developed no new impressions.

The pictures of Oriental life familiar to my eyes from childhood were realized ; the indolent sippers of coffee and sherbet, the indefatigable smokers of the nargileh and the chibouk, the sellers of fruit and candy who build pyramids of their wares, and sit in the shade of a palm branch inviting custom with songs descriptive of the joys of fruit-eating and sugar-sucking, the pestilential donkey-boys, who follow the foreigners like summer flies, the camels stalking through the streets or kneeling in front of the bazars to be laden or unladen—all these sights were repeated again and

again. Clumsily clad women waddled in the middle of the street, and were shrieked at by drivers who claimed the right of way; these women always waddle and look over the ridges of their black veils with soft, expressionless eyes rimmed round with dark lines of kohl. Often I stopped in the shelter of a palm grove—there are few enough in Alexandria, but they are most inviting—and took note of the trifling events that made up the life of the people. A boy's quarrel, a dog fight, a dispute over a bargain, a wandering minstrel singing or chanting to the monotonous accompaniment of the two-stringed lute—each and all of these were of sufficient moment to attract an audience. Egyptian, Nubian, Turk, Maltese, Algerine, Greek, Darweesh, Frank, and Friar, they gather from all quarters and loiter in the sun until even this slight episode has come to an end, and there is nothing left them but coffee and tobacco. My attention was attracted at last, when even a palm shadow grew oppressive, and my lips refused sherbet; I was delighted to discover a commotion at the lower end of the street, a commotion that fairly blocked the way, and was slowly creeping up toward the palm garden where I stood.

There was wailing in the air, and the sharp, shrill screams of women rose at intervals; a procession of men, bearing over their heads a rude bier, pushed its way out of the throng and quick-

ened its pace as it drew near; the bier, having a tall head-board, was entirely covered with a shawl, and from the top of the head-board dangled certain head ornaments worn by Eastern women, and including a couple of long, false braids of silk that are fastened in the hair. The fair Ophelia was going to her grave preceded by a band of blind old men who wagged their heads in the sun and cried repeatedly, "There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his Prophet." After these hired chanters came the male relatives of the deceased, but the females followed the bier. The hired mourners hovered in the rear; they laughed, ogled the wayfarers over their heavy, black veils, chattered, jostled one another, yet turned again to their duty, and screamed with a piercing tremolo, or with short, sharp cries that rang painfully upon the ear. Many bystanders joined in the procession; it is thought well of a man if he helps to swell a funeral pageant. I joined these volunteers, and was crowded in among the children of the Prophet. I was pushed from one side of the street to the other and regarded with jealous eyes, and finally refused admittance to the cemetery, where the graves lay close together, and the multitudes of white or painted headstones, many of them having carved fezes or turbans on them, glowed and glistened in the sun. Clouds of sand blew over the walls and drifted among the tombs. The funeral procession paused for a few

moments at the open grave; the old men wagged their heads and called on Allah; the women screamed, and then every one turned back into the city, sipped coffee and smoked until the tranquil mind had dismissed all thoughts of death, and only the beloved sat in the deserted house, and wailed in "the night of desolation," for the soul is supposed to lodge in the body four and twenty hours after death. Therefore he sat alone in his house, wailing through the night of desolation for the soul that was passing to its everlasting habitation.

Why tarry longer this side of Cairo? thought I, and the next morning took train and steamed across the Delta. As for Alexandria, once the wonder of the world, it has been rubbed out and begun again.

VII.

THE DELTA.

THE last glimpse of Alexandria from the railway station in the extreme west of the town is not calculated to inspire a feeling of regret at quitting this gateway of the East. The white city glares in the sun; everything comes to a sudden and a rather ugly termination. There are new buildings slowly rising and old ones are slowly crumbling away. The stonecutters chip-

ping at their blocks; the masons tapping with their trowels; the complaining camels waiting to be relieved of their burdens, as they stagger under the loads that are hung to their humps on either side, or drop down on their knees as if they were going all to pieces; the cries of the laborers as they pull at the ropes and swing the great blocks of yellow stone in place—this is the last glimpse you have of the famous port of Egypt as you are about to set forth on your journey across the Isthmus of Suez. The station is a fine one, and the accommodations not to be complained of, yet it seemed to me that the building was out of place, and that it needed the management of foreign hands to keep it in good condition.

Sand drifted everywhere. A multitude of travelers wandered to and fro under the unpaved corridors and through the rooms, seeming not to know what to do with themselves. Coffee, wines, cigars, and cakes were served you on little tables planted almost anywhere. While I sat with my heels buried in the very edge of the desert, native bootblacks haunted me with just English enough at their disposal to make it necessary for them to dispose of it a thousand times over. Volunteer porters seized upon my portmanteau every five minutes, and it became necessary to deposit it in the next room before they were persuaded to turn their attention to some fresher arrival. The ticket-seller seemed to take it as an unkindness

on the part of the traveling public that his meditations in the rear of the office were so frequently and so inconsiderately disturbed. We were all locked out of the platform until the last moment, and then hurried into our respective carriages by guards, who overpowered if they did not humble us with their air of authority. All these officials were Turks and Moslems ; the Christian dogs, who have had their day in the cradle of their creed, are for the most part now looked upon as intruders, though they travel first class and scatter money with foolish generosity as they go. The express train from Alexandria to Cairo does the one hundred and thirty-one miles in four and a half hours. I selected the accommodation train as preferable—two hours extra were not too many in a land that I have come to see. A bell rang in the station, and I turned to the window, happy in the thought that I was at last on my way to Cairo. A few people came, out of the many that were lounging on the platform of the station, and took seats in the train. As we didn't start immediately, they alighted and resumed their cigarettes. Again the bell rung and yet again, and it was apparently a mere accident that finally set us in motion, and only then did the last passenger step rather briskly to the edge of the platform and clutch the train in good earnest, and with a look of surprise. I know not how many times we halted out in the brown desert, among the marshes and be-

side green pools of standing water, and along the grassy prairies of the Delta. I have a recollection of bells that seemed to ring for no earthly reason save to flatter us into the belief that we were starting or about to start. As we ran along the shores, the low, marshy shores of Lake Mareotis, which old Strabo called a sea, the desolation of the scene removed the disappointment and regret that I experienced in Alexandria when I was looking in vain for some trace of its original splendor. When Strabo's sea was covered with galleys, when greater riches flowed into Alexandria from this still water than from the great sea to the west, so that the fairest portion of the city lay among these marshes, did no oracle predict that the hour would come when the stork and the pelican would stretch their necks among the waving reeds, and the wild duck wing its arrowy flight over the deserted wastes, unmolested save by the occasional flash of an Englishman's rifle? On each side of the road small Arab villages are literally squatting in the sun. At the first glance, it is difficult to imagine them inhabited by human beings; mud walls as high as your head, bent into every possible angle, covered with flat roofs of straw and all kinds of refuse, perforated here and there with small doors, each door leading into a separate habitation, but the effect of the whole being utterly confusing until you have entered and explored a specimen village.

These villages are continually compared to enormous wasps' nests, and I can think of no comparison more striking. They swarm with half-naked Arabs and stark-naked children; with fowls and bleating flocks and braying donkeys. Overhead the pigeons whirl in clouds, for they are prized for their guano, the chief fuel of the country. Sometimes a date palm stands alone in the midst of a mud-brown village, and seems to apologize for it with its stately stem and all its lovely leaves; without the palm the village is sure to sink into insignificance, for you seldom find mosque, dome, or a minaret in so small a community. Sometimes a camel stands with its homely and awkward legs spread out and its scornful nose in the air, as if it could not find words to express its contempt for these habitations of man—and probably it can't! Out of the hem of the desert the cotton fields begin to show their little bolls of snow; the corn spreads its mantle over the land, and on every side of us we see the drawers of water dropping their leathern buckets into small canals, and swinging them shoulder-high over into the gutters that feed the planted fields. The whole country seems to be awakening from its drowsy, desert dream as we approach the Delta. The clover creeps off into the desert, all the meadows are threaded with arteries through which the water actually pulsates, for every toss of the skin-bucket over the shoulders of the swart

laborer who toils from dawn to dusk sends a wave leaping from end to end. Stay the hand of that human water-mill, and the dry tongue of the desert will lap up the last drop of moisture from the meadows and creep down day by day until it has touched the sea. They feed one upon the other—Egypt and the Egyptian; cut the ligature that binds them together, body to body, and the bones of the one will be ground into the sand of the other.

At Tantah, a veritable city, with mosques, and minarets, and bazars, and caravans, and a great annual fair that is one of the sights of Egypt—at Tantah I gave thanks for a deliverance out of the disappointment and despondency that I had suffered at Alexandria. Tantah is alive with all the elements of the East that as yet have not been diluted, as they certainly are at Alexandria. Tantah has its saint, too, a marvelous fellow—by the by, they call a fellow a *fellah* in this country—who must have been a giant in his day, for the Moslems call on him in their distress; and, in the midst of a storm, when in danger of an accident or in great trouble of any sort, it is the correct thing to cry, "Ya seyyid, ya Bedawee!" He was a Bedawee. On his return from Mecca he passed through Tantah, liked it, established himself there, and there he died, about six centuries ago. An hour before daybreak the muezzin, leaning from the starlit gallery of his minaret,

calls, in a loud, clear voice, on Seyyid Ahmed-el-Bedawee, and his name is coupled with "all the favorites of God," by the united voices of these prayer-callers over the roofs of the infidel East. Happy Tantah! Thrice in the year she is flooded with pilgrims, who come hither to pray at the tomb of St. Seyyid. As many as two hundred thousand are in the field at once. While caravans of merchandise are heaped in her streets, the very air is laden with spices; all the picturesque people of the desert and the mountains pitch their tents about her borders. Armies of camels wag their flabby lips and switch their ridiculous tails in dumb contentment so long as the fair lasts; but, on the ninth day, they cry out against their master as they kneel to be reladen, and then, with long strides, they set their faces toward home, and Tantah subsides into summer and a furnace heat. At Tantah we are in the land of Goshen. We might have guessed it from the delicious green of the juicy grasses, from the fragrant gardens, the flowering almonds, the blossoming beans, the frequent palms, the tamarisks—that sacred tree of Osiris—and from the orange groves that are not far distant, the groves that glut the market of Cairo. We have crossed one branch of the Nile, almost without looking at it, for we wish to come upon it decently and in order at Cairo, where the Nile fleets are moored. We crossed it by an iron

bridge that would not seem out of place were it spanning the Thames, but here it is a two-million-dollar innovation, very convenient, no doubt, though one hates to find too many home comforts on the wrong side of the globe. But for the accident which resulted in the death of the Khedive's elder brother in 1856, when the train on which he was returning from Alexandria to Cairo by night was run over the bank into the river instead of on to a ferryboat which should have been there to receive it—but was not—but for this calamity, which hastened the present Viceroy to the throne, we might still have had fifteen minutes of Nile life in our trip across the isthmus. Let us bide our time. Have we not eaten of the Yussef Effendi mandarins, fresh from the orchards of Benha? They are the juiciest and most golden of all the Egyptian fruits, and the lips of the Cairenes are never so musical as when moist with their dew.

Benha-el-Assal, Benha-of-honey, where are your comb-builders, your burly bees, that they leave the Egyptian bread sour and dry when it should be sweet and toothsome, for it is hardly earned? Alas! for the bees of Benha, whose fame has given birth to a proverb, they have swarmed in some undiscovered country, some oasis perchance, where they give new life to the parched lips and fainting hearts of desert pilgrims who have kept their treasure secret. Benha falls

back on her mandarins, and is still hailed with delight whenever the train comes in. At every station between Alexandria and Cairo, the trains are visited by regiments of fruit-, beer-, and water-sellers. Everybody bargains; nearly everybody buys something at thrice its market value. Such big, sleepy eyes as are turned up to us from over the solemn black veils of the women; such white teeth as flash on us from between the plump laughing lips of the children; round arms, high, proud bosoms, but half concealed by dark blue robes with a thread of silver woven in their hem; full-blossomed youth, old age withered and woe-begone, dark skins and fair ones, ebony Nubians, pale waifs with the mark of the Frank indelibly impressed in form and feature, and all of them, every single soul, crying and beseeching "Back-sheesh!" At first it amuses you, this perpetual teasing of a whole race; then you grow tired of it, and after that comes a dread of the very word that is sure to shut your heart and your purse against the beggar who utters it. Yet they can not be blamed. They would give as much, no doubt, as you give them were you to change places with them. Already the poverty of Egypt begins to stare me in the face. A starving people, who eat little, and so very little that it is a marvel that they live and flourish on it, have a right to ask aid of the well-to-do Howadji who visits their country for the mere pleasure of the hour. He is their

only source of revenue, and, without the mite which he throws them from time to time (there is small danger of his doing it too often), they would suffer the lash or the bastinado at the hands of the Khedive's officials, who are sent through the country like locusts to seize upon the major part of all that is good. Little creatures under the window, with copper wristlets and dangling ear-rings strung with bits of copper coin, poised their porous water-jars in the palms of their hands, and held their hands over their shoulders in exquisitely graceful postures. They took the copper rings from their ears and tore the copper bands from their wrists and offered us the handful for a few francs. The trinkets were not worth as many sous, and with patience and perseverance they would have given them to you at your own price, but it served to assure me that their cries for backsheesh were inspired by something more worthy of attention than the complaints of most beggars. These people will work for a mere trifle, and work as no one else can work in this climate. Their wage is ridiculously small, and yet, spite of their toil, their hopeless, lifelong toil, they sing as the birds sing the whole day through; and their laugh is so hearty and frequent that, if you choose to, you can believe that they are as well provided for as yourself. Meanwhile, the lame, the halt and the blind work their way to the front, and, give them as little as

you choose or give nothing, they will laugh in their luxurious sunshine and sing the everlasting song of happy indifference to fate. I am told that their creed has much to do with this commendable spirit of resignation. It is certainly not common with Christians. I believe we do not, as a general thing, carol to any extent on an empty stomach. But I am forgetting the Pharaohs. As we whirled too rapidly through the green meadows of Goshen, I fell into a conversation with a fellow passenger, an Englishman in a fez, which indicated that the wearer was either long a resident of the East, or had just arrived: having heard many interesting facts in his experience, though, like an Englishman, he was to a very great extent involved in a kind of hallowed mystery, I was surprised and amused to find my unknown companion a man of considerable importance in the district where he alighted from the train. A company of distinguished Moslems awaited his advent and received him with profound salaams; one of them kissed his hand with great reverence and bowed his forehead upon the back of the hand, where he retained it a moment. A superb horse, I may safely call it a steed on this soil, was in readiness, and when my late companion was seated in a saddle that blazed with gold embroidery, and with its scarlet tassels dangling almost to the heels of the charger, several attendants mounted the national donkeys, and he

departed amid the repeated salaams of the company. I suppose I shall never discover who or what he was; no one on the train, with whom I spoke, had any knowledge of him.

The interest of the hour was beginning to flag when a cry rang through the train from end to end; the whole passenger list sprang suddenly to the windows; on our right, there in the horizon, over the gardens of the Cairenes, between the palm groves on the edge of the desert, beyond the broad line of yellow sand, loomed the Pyramids! From that moment my heart thumped like an engine. On both sides of the way, far off in the horizon, rose the high drifts of desert sand. The banana and the palm spring close besides us. The menagerie—camels, horses, asses, buffalo—that never ceases to delight so long as Egypt holds you in your right mind, threaded all the winding roads; in the grass by the wayside white ibises were feeding, as fearless as barnyard fowls. Then a glimmer of flat roofs and swelling domes, of towering minarets and twinkling crescents, all in a sunset flash. The tumult of the arrival, the rapid drive through a city I could at that moment have called Paris, or anything, it is so Frankified up by the station, and then the shadow of narrow streets roofed over, the glamour and the glory of the East, just for five minutes to have had my Arabian Tales so illustrated is worth a lifetime of aimless wandering. A narrow lane between tall

buildings, a lane that seemed endless, and with all its turns for nothing, and then—a hammock under the palms in a hidden garden in the moonlight, and around me the broad verandas of the most charming hotel in Cairo!

VIII.

GRAND CAIRO.

Hôtel du Nil, Cairo.

My first night in Cairo was so like a chapter out of the "Arabian Tales," that I could scarcely believe my eyes as I strolled about and met the Enchanted Princess, the Slave of Love, the Calenders, the Three Sisters, and the Barber with all his brothers. The garden of the hotel but half dispelled the charm of my new life, for as a garden it is worthy to be named in story, if but the moon looks over the high roof of the house adjoining, and covers the palms with glory. Birds start from their sleep and mutter among the branches; the mummies' cases that stand at the top of the broad avenue look as if they could make astounding revelations if they but chose to break the silence of three thousand years. The crocodile that is suspended under the veranda stirs in the light breeze, and seems alive again, and a pet monkey drops suddenly into your lap as you

lounge in one of the arbors, your cigar alight, and your soul at peace with all the world. The kiosk in the center of the garden is stored with the latest journals. Here the loyal Britisher reads his "Times," and the American abroad turns fondly to his favorite; but for the English one hears and the traveling suits one sees, the garden might pass for an oasis in the sand and the dust of the city. Our servants are mostly natives. We go to our doors and windows when we are in need of service, clap our hands thrice in a melodramatic manner, and receive an immediate response from some corner of the garden; we give our orders in Italian or French, and are obeyed in silence. The cool, delicious air of the early morning woos us from our sleep; we take our coffee and our rolls at any hour we choose, and this light refreshment lasts until midday, when breakfast is served in state. Of course, we have been busy sight-seeing and are inclined to talk with our neighbor, exchanging impressions and forming new plans. In the afternoon we doze; for, though the Cairo winter is not by any means hot, we find it pleasanter to rest when the sun is overhead, and to set out afresh toward evening, when the city is seen to the best advantage.

The Khedive, with an affectation of the spirit of reform which delights the superficial observer, although the advantages of that reformation

seem to touch him solely while they entirely escape his people—the Khedive is rapidly transforming Cairo into a kind of spurious Paris. The Saracenic walls are pounded into powder; the narrow, winding lanes—you can hardly call them streets, they are so narrow and so crooked—are being broadened and straightened; the brown tints of the old houses are covered over with a whitewash that glares unpleasantly in the bright sunshine. The newer suburbs are filled with villas in the midst of dusty gardens that might as well locate themselves in some French city, for they look out of place in Egypt, and rob the country of much of its picturesqueness. All the hotels are utterly modern; pass the great ugly stone front of the new hotel opposite the Ezbekeeyah, once a grove where the Moslems sipped coffee and smoked the nargileh, and now a hideous artificial garden with a high iron fence about it, and you will see the kiosk before the chief entrance filled with pleasure- or health-seeking foreigners, who assume the Oriental languor and the fez immediately upon their arrrival, and burden themselves with both during the few weeks of their stay in a country they never get used to. Shepherd's Hotel, not far removed, and in the heart of the reformed quarter of the city, is another spectacle for gods and donkey-boys. Thomas Cook & Son's traveling caravans pour into Shepherd's from time to time; they are an uneasy,

ill-assorted, "personally conducted" lot; they go forth in a body and do up the town sights by machinery, and Heaven protect the conscientious traveler whose track lies in their wake!

This is not the Cairo I have dreamed of; even the fine fellow with his turban wound gracefully about his head, only the scarlet top of his tarboosh visible, and his long garments of various colors, that wrap him from shoulder to feet, even this man, who has fabrics of silver and gold and camel's hair, and the soft, embroidered tissues of Persia for sale, can not make me forget that I am in the midst of foreigners, who have brought hither the atmosphere of the very countries I have lately fled from. There are the sellers of scented water, who carry their refreshing drink in huge jars of porous clay strapped to their backs; the mouth of the vessel is often filled with flowers; the long spout that curls over their shoulder shoots out its delicious stream when the vender stoops over and holds his brazen cup in front of him to receive it. They are capital shots, these watermen. Those of the poorer class carry water in goat-skin sacks, with a long brass stem, the mouth of which they stop with their thumbs. These water-carriers have two brazen cups, and it is their custom to go about the streets clashing the cups together like cymbals. The pipe-cleaners, the itinerant barbers who shave their customers on the curbstones, if there be one, or under a

tree; the soothsayers, dressed in rags and reading fortunes in a handful of cowry shells, coppers, and colored beads; the necromancers and snake-charmers, and men with dancing monkeys, and boys with great, fat lizards for sale; the women in their sacks of silk, and their veils that are held as high as the bridges of their noses by bamboo bowsprits that shoot up to the roots of their hair, and are fastened in their head gear; the harem beauties in stylish broughams with an English driver and a eunuch on the box; the sons of the Khedive driving out, each in his own establishment, and just such a one as would cause no comment in Hyde Park during the season; the Khedive himself in a handsome carriage, with a brace of swift-footed, sleek-limbed *sais*, glorious in gold-embroidered jackets, flowing, snow-white skirts, and sleeves that spread like wings, in jaunty tarbooshes with tossing tassels half a yard in length, running forty paces in advance of the horses and clearing the crowded streets; a half-dozen mounted attendants, and nothing more—not even so much as a recognition from the populace who are crowded close upon the hoofs of his horses—all these elements of Cairene daily life, delightful as they are, can not cause me to overlook the fact that Cairo is slowly but surely going to the dogs—the Christian dogs, I mean!

I did once succeed in losing myself. I was

on foot and quite alone, which accounts for it. With infinite difficulty I had escaped the importuning donkey-boys, and was strolling from one street to another, past numberless mosques and drinking-fountains and enticing coffee-shops. I lost all track of my countrymen; there wasn't a cork hat (like an inverted washbowl), or a white umbrella, or a pair of canvas shoes to be seen. Even the donkey and his master seemed to have dissolved into thin air. I passed through great street gates, such as shut the residents of the various quarters of the town each in his own quarter, and saw the mud-brown houses that as yet have not grown white at the approach of the innovator, whose stories crept out over the street, farther and farther the higher they get, and where the roofs of the opposite houses almost meet at last. These streets were very shady, and very cool and quiet. Many an eye was turned on me in surprise, and when I had at last come into a remote quarter beyond half a dozen streets, and found myself suddenly surrounded by a mob of half-grown boys, who were evidently unaccustomed to intruders, I was forced to make as speedy a retreat as possible, followed by a shower of stones. The gates, which are closed at evening, make separate cities of these several quarters. If you wish to pass from one quarter to another after dark, you must take your lantern and summon the gatekeeper, who responds and carefully locks

you out afterward. Gas-lamps are unknown in that end of Cairo, and white faces a novelty. I was an hour or more working my way out of the unchristian latitudes, climbing out, as it were, by the minarets, in each of which I fancied I saw a resemblance to the one that stands within earshot of our hotel. All foreigners either ride or drive in Cairo, but I got more experience in that one walk than I could have gathered with the aid of fifty donkeys.

One comes in from the streets weary and dust-covered. The after-breakfast hour in the shade of our garden, with a mouthful of thick, black coffee, in a cup about the size of an egg-shell, a cigarette and an easy-chair, is as precious as almost any in the day. It is then that the venerable Bedawee who for ever haunts us draws forth from his coarse camel's-hair cloak a handful of scarabæ, and assures us in good English that they are genuine antiques, and not base imitations. The magician arrives and performs clever tricks, after each of which he begs a trifle ; nothing short of a shilling satisfies him, and he is apt to turn on his heel and depart in disgust before his *repertoire* is half exhausted. Yesterday a little fellow, who was awaiting patronage by the hotel garden gate, cried out to me, "Want to see snakes, Howadji ?" and the next moment he emptied a bag of sluggish reptiles at my feet, and began twining them about his neck and arms. That boy

goes to sleep in the afternoon with his bag of snakes for a pillow.

As the day begins to wane, if it be Friday or Sunday, we, the time-killers of Cairo, hasten to the Shoobra, and for two hours or more drive up and down one of the strangest avenues under the sun. The Shoobra road leads from Cairo to the village of Shoobra, about four miles distant. It is as straight as an arrow, and is bordered by sycamore, fig, and acacia trees. The dense boughs are interlocked above it. Palaces and villas are scattered here and there, and on each side you look off upon great meadows, dotted with ibises and sprinkled with palms, and see in the horizon the summits of the Pyramids. All that is lovely and unlovely in Cairo finds its way to the Shoobra; the beauties and the beasts, the princes, the beggars, the idols of the harem, donkey-boys, foreigners, camel trains, and the odds and ends of humanity. You drive up one side of the way and down the other, ogling and being ogled to your heart's content. The fat gentleman in European costume, with a tarboosh and a half-dozen mounted attendants, is the Khedive. In that close carriage, under the protection of a eunuch on a splendid horse, are two of his favorite wives —milk-white Circassian beauties with their faces swathed in snowy folds of gauze; the exquisite carmine lips, even the faint rose-tint of the cheek, are visible through this coquettish mask; high-

arched eyebrows and eyes as black as night are busy with the world they know so little of. Lovely beyond description are these slaves, but in spite of this dazzling loveliness you can see that it is chiefly artificial. The eyebrows are painted; the eyelids are tipped with kohl, and a dark line extending from the outer corners of the eyes makes them seem much larger than they are. That white skin is softened and made whiter with powder; the flush of the cheek and the glow of the lips have been heightened for the occasion, and all the gauze that covers the forehead like a turban, and the lower part of the face like a transparent mask, adds immensely to the brilliancy of these feminine charms. With white camels'-hair shawls, covered with rich gold embroidery, lemon-colored kids, a Parisian fan, the light of the harem is suffered to blaze upon the world for a brief hour, but she must stop within her prison like a gorgeous tropical flower under glass, or that light will be put out! Two, three, a half-dozen carriages, and some of them having three or four veiled beauties in them, wheel slowly by; a eunuch to each—a brutal-looking thing he is—and there you have some of the more favored of the wives at the mercy of your eyes. You may look as earnestly as you choose and you will not out-stare them; smile even, and the chances are they will hide a smile in their fans. *Ya Mahomet!* is your harem stored with fleshpots such as these? Look well,

for you can not look long; the carriage rolls away, you are dazed for a moment, but for a moment only, for in the muffled rumble of those wheels you are delivered from the snare of splendid eyes.

On the Shoobra you are best able to classify Cairenes. You at once detect and throw out the tourist, who is here for the season only. What is left, then, if we do not consider the natives of the East? A few Italians, who may be either spurious counts or tenors in the opera; some Greeks, full of cunning and conceit, not a few members of the ballet corps, and the over-dressed and under-bred ladies who pass for countesses, but who are more likely to have graduated from the velocipedes in the *café chantants* of Paris and Vienna. On our return to town, swarms of the *sais* are in waiting, for they are not allowed on the fashionable drive. They spring lightly in front of the horses, wave their wands, and, as if by magic, the way opens before them. These runners are the most graceful and picturesque people of this race; they are as light-footed as gazelles; their muscles are of fine steel, elastic and bounding. They tire out a horse, and show no fatigue after they have run for hours, but they come to their graves while the dew of their youth is still moist and their upper lips are scarcely darkened with down.

We go to the citadel at sunset, climbing up the long hill to the bluff on which it stands. The

mosque of Mahomet Ali, the minarets of which give the first welcome to the stranger as he approaches Cairo, is at your back. You lean from the parapet that crowns an abrupt cliff, three hundred feet above the plain below. The glare has gone out of the sky, and a soft, transparent shadow seems to be floating in the air, a silvery-blue veil through which every object visible in the plain is idealized. The thousands of flat roofs swarm with those who have come out upon the housetops to enjoy the twilight; the mosque domes look as light and airy as bubbles; minarets and stately palms pierce the delicious air; so still is everything that the great cemetery beneath you, with its domed tombs and walls and narrow streets, and memorial stones that resemble men at this distance—the dead city seems one with the living city, and both are silent under the sheltering wing of night. From the citadel you track the Nile for miles, with its broad green hem, its palms and pyramids, and the white flocks of its barges drifting to and fro. There is the desert, that sea of sand stretching its tawny waves to the horizon, as vast, as mysterious, as solemn as night itself. A little shiver slides down your spine; it is time to be getting down into the town again, for the evening is chilly. What remains? The opera in the evening, in the handsome house that was built as if by magic in the short space of five months, and was ready for the opening *fêtes* of the Suez Canal in 1869; "Aïda," on

its native boards, with remarkably fine appointments. The Khedive is in his proscenium box; a couple of boxes full of sons next to him; half a dozen boxes opposite closed in with thick wire cloth, so that you see white ghosts moving among the shadows like splendid cockatoos, but are unable to distinguish the faces; these are the cages for the harem; the eunuchs keep the restless occupants under lock and key. The lower boxes are mostly empty; the upper circle is comfortably filled with black and brown faces, white turbans, and scarlet tarbooshes. Egyptian attendants in native costume come out and touch up the footlights; it is as if a new scene in "Aïda" were being rehearsed. This great, empty house, with its company of four hundred singers, dancers, musicians, and supernumeraries, is one of the evidences of that celebrated reform which the Khedive is working in Egypt. He sinks some thousands of francs per night during a long season of opera. The establishment has never paid, but all deficiencies are made up from the private purse of this illustrious progressionalist. He amuses himself with the ballet, delights the foreigner with his display of generosity, and gets much credit from the world at large for his advanced and liberal views. Meanwhile his miserable, ill-fed, thoroughly cowed slave-subjects supply the extra drain upon the royal purse, and dumbly accept an increase of taxes. Justice is an

excellent thing in the Old Testament, but it seems to have gone out of fashion on its native soil. At midnight the dark Mooskee is illuminated by a troupe of half-naked runners, who bear aloft their torches with flames a yard long. In the midst of this flight of demons—the spectacle is startling and uncommon—the Khedive is whirled away to his harem, and the Mooskee is left in silence and deeper darkness.

IX.

THE BATHS AND THE BAZAARS.

It is his voice, his pathetic and penetrating voice, that breaks the silence of this venerable land, and that song of his will recur to you again and again, when old Egypt shall have become a dim but ever-delightful memory in your life. It is his patient, baby face, the image of innocence, his soft, dark eye, with just a suggestion of mischief lurking in the corner of it, his dainty footsteps that fall as lightly as "blown roses on the grass"; you will recall his arch, coquettish ways, his childish faith in Providence that teaches him to bear and forbear and abide his time. This he does, for he can't help himself; he is at the mercy of a little tyrant, who follows him like a fate; the voice of his master is continually in his

ears, and such ears! They are ears in which the echoes might increase and multiply the shrill piping cries of that pitiless master until the firmament seemed stuffed full of donkey boys; it is then that he sets his face against heaven, and straightens his neck and opens his mouth, as if he were about to discharge a ramrod that had long been kept secret within him. At last the hour of his deliverance has come, and what an hour it is for all parties concerned, when the heavens seem likely to fall, and the earth to quake, and the fountains of the great deep to be broken up! It was his song; all his very own; no other living creature cares to lay claim to it; and there are those who are dumb, the slug, for instance, and the snail in her winding house—they are all voiceless for ever, and only because they have heard the chant of the Egyptian "donk," and have been holding their breath all these years, lest by chance, or in the course of nature, their song might be like unto his. Ah! to have heard him, if for but once, and to hear him yet again as he writhes in his delicious agony, and gasps and gags while all the immeasurable melody of his melodious tribe is chopped off and spouted forth at each vibration of his ears and tail, as if it were being pumped out by some powerful but invisible agency—and the pump needed greasing. He is the glory and the shame of that little tyrant, his master. His shaggy coat is shaven as smooth as velvet. Sometimes

ridges of fur are left on his sides, embroideries that are highly picturesque ; his legs are trimmed so finely that he beguiles you into the belief that he has on two pairs of clocked stockings. He jingles all over with bells and cowry-shells, worn for luck. He is a study of color ; he even dyes his hair in some cases, and if his jacket is naturally white the chances are he will have a blue forehead and rose-tinted hoofs ; and when his great padded saddle, about the shape of a bag of sand, and quite as hard, is covered with a cloth of deep scarlet, fringed with gold, that falls over his tail and makes such a figure in the perpetual circus of the Cairo streets, there is nothing more splendid than he, and he knows it.

This establishment is engaged for the tour of the bazaars. Your donkey goes anywhere, up stairs or down, through a door or a window, into the most secret recesses of the merchants' quarters, and it is for this reason that we engage him. Let us hence, Ali, or whatever your name chances to be this morning ! I find that the donkey changes his name to suit the nationality of his rider, and perhaps the boy-master has an eye to the sentiment of his customer, and is equally obliging. Ali, who has been holding his diminutive beast by the bridle for the last two hours, now skips into the middle of the ever-shadowy mooskee, and with consummate skill manages to insert his beast between my legs, and

we dash off at a high rate of speed. I am obliged to give my attention to the saddle, for we are driven from side to side — Ali, donkey, and myself — by the dense crowd that sways hither and thither. Carriages drive us to the wall, camels step over us, other donkeys salute us on the wing, and meanwhile a thousand fellahs have cursed us for riding into their stomachs, and half a thousand fellahahs, the wives of the above, good country folk, are a little dazed with the gorgeousness of the city, and forget to step out of the way. The mooskee is always our starting point; we wind our way out to the mooskee through the dark lane under the houses that crowd against the garden of our hotel. The mooskee is always in shadow, for the street is roofed over in the fashion of the bazaar, and every merchant on the two sides of it throws down the front of his shop, and admits you to the inspection of his wares as you sit in the saddle. Ali pilots me through the swarming Cairenes, and, finally, with an agile thrust of his shoulder, suddenly precipitates the donkey and me into a narrow side street that leads off to the bazaars. Ali is always doing something of this kind; sometimes he gives a lift from behind, and I am launched on to the ears of my donkey. This is his way of heightening our rate of speed as he runs behind us, barelegged, and with a single garment partially enveloping his breast.

The covered passages in the bazaar quarter are filled with a soft amber light that makes a kind of paradise of old houses that can't be very clean. The bazaars are numerous, but they cleave one to another, the silversmith to his neighboring silversmith, the seller of spices to the other spice-sellers, all those of a kind squatting in a row, patiently waiting custom without any show of jealousy or even of rivalry, also without much energy and apparently without guile. Each shop is in reality a mere cabinet thrown wide open to the street. It is crowded with fabrics that are displayed only when a customer presents himself and prevails upon the sedate merchant, who may be smoking, sleeping, or at prayer on the counter, to allow him to bargain for his wares. Life is too short to admit of many purchases in a Turkish bazaar. You must needs talk against time and to no purpose whatever until the merchant discovers that you are not to be starved out and driven up to his exorbitant price by hunger or impatience; he regales you with lemonade or coffee or a pipe, if you will; he cheerfully displays every article in his shop, and gives you ample opportunity to examine the texture thereof, but he will not be persuaded to show much interest in you as a customer; in fact, you are apt to feel as if the merchant had done you the greatest possible favor in allowing you to purchase of his stock at any price.

For hours we drift to and fro among the shady aisles of the bazaars from *sook* to *sook*, as the various quarters are called. The gold- and silversmiths bring forth their treasures—barbaric ornaments for head and breast and arms; bracelets as thick as ropes, roughly beaten out of precious ores; caskets, to be worn on chains, wherein mystical writing is concealed; armlets, charms, rude rings set with great turquoises; belts of glittering disks linked in and in, and necklaces of coins strung together in a web that covers half the breast. We move among merchants sitting cross-legged among bales of rich embroideries; bazaars with millions of slippers, and nothing but slippers, visible; perfumers, who freight the air with subtle odors, who have sacks of gums yawning before them—frankincense, myrrh, aloes, and rose-attar; tobacconists, pipe-sellers, armorers, with antique Damascus blades and shields and choice armor of curious workmanship; stores of oil and honey; sellers of fruits and cool drinks chilled with snow; cooks who keep their spits turning and feed the hungry mouths of these easy-going merchants, who send to them for their dinner when they grow weary of their pipe. There are inner rooms, or courts, hung with draperies, lit by the subdued light that steals through the painted awning of rushes, and here the carpets of Smyrna and the rugs of Damascus and Stamboul are unrolled at your feet—bewildering bits

of color that make a garden of the dingy barn-like court. The *sooks* are very Babels. On certain days auctioneers push their way through the crowds of customers who are nearly always to be found here, crying their wares from end to end, and followed by those who are bent upon bringing the bargain to a close while it is yet day: old lamps and new, garments that are fresh from the hands of the dainty needle-woman, garments that have been worn threadbare and faded in the fierce sunshine, and turned and patched and cast off, to be re-turned and re-patched and offered for sale in the great bazaar on auction day. The entertainment of the shopkeepers lasts till sunset, and then these serene old men rouse themselves, step down from their counters, put up the shutters, and wander off to the café, to digest the news of the day over the bubbling, the bewitching nargileh.

The bazaars after dark are as silent and as solemn as the tombs of the kings on the desert yonder. I know a wild bazaar within whose fragrant recesses lodge all the glories of the East. The spotted skins of leopards, as soft as satin and as sweet as musk, swing in the open door. On heaps of rugs, his turban fallen among stuffed lizards and chameleons, his arm thrown over the dull scales of a stark crocodile, and his feet in a bed of Indian shells, sleeps the royal merchant. I can not enter his treasure-house, for there is only

room for one, but I can tarry while he sleeps and feast my eyes on such stuff as dreams are made of —gourds full of scarabæi, and strings of ostrich eggs; some of these eggs are tattooed by cunning hands, and hang, like curious lamps of alabaster, suspended from the roof. There are musical instruments of quaint form and quainter voice, inlaid with pearl and ivory: the poet's lute, to whose monotonous thrumming the improvisator breathes forth his sweet romances; the *darabukkeh* drum; the *tar,* with its broad hoop set thick with jingling platters; the *sagat* that clash in the skillful fingers of the dancing *sozeeyehs.* Pipe-bowls of painted clay, with stems a man's length, and mouthpieces whereon half the wealth of the happy smokers is expended; great globes of priceless amber, set with jewels and hooped with gold—it is thus that the cool incense of the *latakia* approaches the lips of him who gives his soul to peace and the extreme delight of the *chibouk.* The dark girdles of thongs, such as the Indian maids delight in, tufts of ostrich plumes, bows and arrows from Abyssinia, and carved cocoanuts from the groves beyond the desert—there is nothing to be thought of in the marvelous pages of the "Arabian Nights," nothing pretty, or peculiar, or portable from the shores that front the Bay of Biscay to the extreme borders of Bagdad, but it, or a shadow of it, is tumbled into this little room in bewildering confusion. But the old fel-

low begins to waken; let us be off, or he will overcome us with an inexhaustible catalogue of his wares.

The safest plan is to go from the bazaars to the baths. Sometimes you are obliged to seek relief in suds and hot water, for the bazaars are unfortunately over-populated, and your presence there is pretty sure to suggest emigration to the least desirable members of the community. Goaded on by an itching desire for change, I direct Ali to hasten to the bath. Ali knows all about it, and orders me to dismount presently at a door that is by no means inviting. The donkey stands unhitched where we leave him. He would stand till doomsday if Ali should forget to resume charge of him. We thread a black passage that is full of dust and cobwebs, and turn suddenly into a room paved with marble, walled with marble, and domed with white stone that might as well have been marble also. In the center of the room—a large square one—gushes a fountain. The dome is perforated with star-shaped windows, sunk deep in the white and semi-transparent partitions that separate one from the other—a kind of alabaster honeycomb, with all the tints of the rainbow streaming through it upon the plashing fountain below. Ali turns me over into the hands of a half-naked attendant, and I am at once conducted up three steps into an alcove where several couches, standing side by side, remind me of a hospital.

On one of these is a Turk in the final agonies of disrobing. On the next a Greek has passed from this sorrowful world into a deep dream of something or other. My third companion is apparently just recovering from the ravages of the bath, and is taking the nargileh in mild doses every few moments. He seems to be doing well, and I am encouraged to proceed with my bath. Swathed in numerous towels, sheets, pillow-cases, etc., poised on wooden sandals, with very tall legs under them, I am led from one chamber to another, from tepid air into an atmosphere that sticks in my throat and weighs upon my chest and burns me so that I faint and grow nervous, and fall into the arms of the attendant, who dashes cold water in my face and smiles his soft, persuasive, sleepy Oriental smile. He rubs me down in a small marble cell filled with a rosy light, and currycombs me with harsh bundles of date-leaf fibers. He twists me in postures that are as painful as they are undignified, and then leaves me to recover. Enter a second slave with soap and water. I am smothered in suds that blind me and fill my nose and mouth, soused from head to foot, buried an inch deep in soapy foam, and again left to get out of it the best way I can. Deserted in that slimy place, I find my way to a fountain in the corner of the room, and gradually come to the light of day once more. Then I am swathed in more sheeting and given back into the hospital ward, where the fresh

air makes me drunk with delight. All this while young Ali keeps his eyes on me and speaks a few words of encouragement. A slave brings a delicious sherbet chilled with snow. I know the physical joys of the paradise these Moslems are waiting for; coffee soon follows, a mere mouthful, but enough for a sensation. From time to time, as I lie at length on this couch of ease, I drop into dreams that are somehow never out of hearing of the plash of the fountain under the dome, never out of sight of a window that opens upon a rose garden and admits the breath of the fairest of flowers. Some one wakes me to unroll my wrappers and to roll me again in wrappings, fresh and dry. Then I feel the stem of the nargileh creeping to my lips, and with monstrous sighs I inhale the fragrance of the bubbling pipe. Ali must have grown hungry at last, for he it was who urged me to resume the duties of life, and with the aid of an attendant or two I did it. The barber brushed me, the boy of the bath brought me a rose that was a little overblown, and dusted me vaguely, as if it were a matter of little moment, which it was, and then I went back into the world feeling lighter every way—in heart, in head, and pocket. Every soul in that blessed bath had to have his separate fee and his separate frown at the size of it.

X.

MOSQUES AND KIOSQUES.

THERE are four hundred mosques in Cairo. None of these are ever filled, unless it be the Az'-har, or "splendid" mosque, which is the great Oriental University. But you seldom enter any of them without finding a few intent worshipers with their faces turned to Mecca as they rise or kneel or bow their foreheads to the pavement over and over again. These mosques are never repaired. Once dedicated to Allah, they are frequented so long as they are tenable, and then they are suffered to crumble away, for it is the will of God, and no Moslem ever dreams of opposing that. A few years ago the foreigner was not admitted to the mosques of Cairo. He was not even permitted to pass in front of some of them. With an order from his consulate, he may now enter and explore any part of them, and the Christian-haters will not scorn to receive a fee from him at the door; in fact, this is expected in every case.

The mosque that is found in every street of the city, in every block almost, and certainly much oftener than there is any excuse for, is usually a very plain stone building, painted without in broad alternate bands of red and white. There are seldom any windows visible, though some-

times you chance upon an opening in the wall, through whose heavy iron grating you catch a glimpse of the cool, shadow-filled cloisters within, where the faithful are at prayer. The first court of the mosque is apt to be flooded with sunshine, a very furnace in the heat of summer. Even the fountain in the center of this court, where those who go to prayer must first bathe, inasmuch as it is a cistern of still and not always very fresh water, can not temper the heat that is reflected from the marble pavement in the narrow and almost shadowless cloisters on the three sides of the court. The fourth side forms the front of the mosque proper; there you put off your shoes, unless you have an extra pair to slip on over those you chance to be in, for no one is permitted to cross that threshold without first shaking the dust of the wicked world from his feet.

There are mosques domed over with alabaster, embroidered with verses from the Koran, wrought in great letters of gold; hung with a thousand lamps and ostrich eggs and long tassels of silk; carpeted with soft rugs wherein only the richest colors are woven, a feast for the eyes and a luxury for the feet of those who have put off their boots, and are wandering about in their stockings. But too often these mosques are as bare as a barn. Many of them have glaring white walls, unrelieved by any ornamentation whatever, for the Moslem is forbidden to make any likeness of anything that

is in heaven above or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth, and he obeys orders to the letter. There are mosques without domes, open to the sun like the outer court, and having scarcely shade enough in them to admit even a short prayer; but it does not matter much to the Arab who drops down alone in the desert at high noon and buries his face in the sand for the sake of Mohammed and all the saints in the calendar from Noah up to date. There is a niche in the wall toward Mecca, an empty niche that looks as if it ought to have a statue in it. On the right of the niche is the high pulpit, with stairs leading up to it, and a gate at the foot of the stairs. On the opposite side of the mosque is a platform on columns; near it are tables from which the Koran is read to the people and expounded by priests sitting on very plump feather beds.

There are two mosques in Cairo standing under the very shadow of the high cliffs where the citadel and the alabaster mosque of Mohammed Ali are lifted up to the sky. These two grand mosques, fronting on a narrow, dingy Egyptian street, and facing one another, mark the beginning and the end of the history of Mohammedan holy houses. The mosque of Sultan Hassan, the finest in all Cairo, was built of blocks brought from the Pyramids. For three years three thousand dollars a day were expended on it,

and when it was at last completed, hung with splendid lamps, its pavements swept continually by the robes of the worshipers, and the tomb of the sultan within the same inclosure, an object of veneration, the mosque must have been the glory of the city. From that hour, A. D. 1357, it has been left to its fate. So long as one stone stands upon another it will be visited by the prayerful Moslems, but not a hand has been put forth to save it in all these years of slow but sure decay. I passed in under the lofty portico. Dust and sand lay in deep drifts along the broken pavement. A few beggars that slept on the threshold seemed the last of their race, and were too lazy or too sleepy to notice me. At the entrance to the mosque my explorations were suspended for a moment. A great beam of wood lay across the passage. Two or three pairs of ragged canvas slippers, of immense size and as filthy as possible, reminded me that my unholy feet were forbidden to enter the mosque in Christian boots. There was no need of entering. I saw all its splendid desolation where I stood—its four lofty half domes on the four sides of the court, each arching toward the great fountain in the center of the court; its hundreds of chains that hung from the arches and once suspended the twinkling lamps that made beautiful the bare-walled, unfurnished mosques. Most of the lamps have dropped from the chains, and the remaining links

are rusting away, so that the chains are of different lengths as they slowly vibrate in the wind that swoops in through the open roof between the half domes. Clouds of pigeons hover in the recesses of the building and nestle in the clustering niches that hang like a broken honeycomb at the point of every arch. Dust everywhere and grass and long weeds; vines creeping out of the cracks in the high walls that are getting ready to fall; and when they fall the tomb of the Sultan will be buried out of sight in one of the glorious ruins of the East. I thought I was alone in the crumbling mosque, but a shadow stole out of the deeper shadow in a far corner and approached me. I was invited into a pair of the public slippers, putting them on over my boots, and the pigeons rushed up into the sky with a roar of wings as we woke the echoes in the lonely place. Another shadow approached, a begging shadow, that had come to a realizing sense of my presence, and he was literally my shadow until I stole out of the place filled with a kind of sentimental awe.

Across the street rise the walls of the mosque that is now being erected by the Khedive, to bear the name of his mother and to hold at last his dust, and the dust of his sons and his favorite wives, and an assortment of daughters perhaps, though girls don't seem to come to the surface in his family. The new mosque is prim and fresh and highly respectable, and very expensive, and will

probably stand to see the day when the sands of the desert shall have fallen out of the wind like dry rain on the prostrate and desolated ruin of its rival. Rival? Heaven forbid! All that is lovely in subdued and harmonious color; all that is beautiful, with the fatal beauty of decay; all that is impressive, and pathetic, and poetical in Cairo, perishes in the fall of the mosque of Sultan Hassan. The venerable mosque of Tooloon, with its court of columns, its great minaret with a winding stair on the outer wall of it—the cornice of that staircase was of amber—its horseshoe arches and its Saracenic ornamentation, has also a marvelous tradition associated with its site. By the *nebk* tree in the court of the mosque is the very spot where Noah's ark stranded. But what a little Ararat it was for so great a flood!

The Az'-har, the "splendid" mosque, the famous university of the Orient, is one of the wonders of Cairo. Imagine an immense court surrounded by four hundred columns of porphyry, marble, and granite taken from the ancient temples of Egypt. On the Mecca side of the court is the place of prayer; the other three sides are partitioned off, and allotted to students from various parts of the East. There is a separate apartment allotted to each province, and a library for the use of the students is in each apartment. The students live here, sleep under the portico—such as are not residents of Cairo—study in the schools,

and recite to the master at the foot of one of the columns. Knowledge is difficult in the Az'-har. Mohammed Ali deprived the university of its properties, and now not one of the three hundred and fourteen professors receives a farthing for his salary, but is obliged to make his living by private teaching, book-copying, etc. The ten thousand students pay nothing for their instruction, but board themselves and make what they can by writing letters for the illiterate, receiving whatever is offered them in charity, and going hungry the rest of the time. There are students from every part of the East, ten thousand of them, all studying out loud, all squatting on the pavement in swarms, that thicken around each of the columns, where the professor, with stick in hand and within hearing distance of a half a dozen other professors, manages to pick out the right answers to their questions from the perpetual thunder of those ten thousand voices. The university is a power in the land, and while it is opposed to the fanaticism of the people, and even ridicules many of the barbarous practices of the dervishes, the students with one accord despise the dog of a Christian who looks in upon them with the assistance of an armed officer of the police, without whose aid it would be impossible to enter the Az'-har, and unsafe to attempt it alone. Three hundred blind men are housed and fed in a neighboring chapel from funds be-

queathed for the purpose. These three hundred blind men quarrel incessantly, beat one another with sticks, and lift their scornful noses in the endeavor to smell out a Christian. When they discover that one is present, their rage is as ludicrous as it is fruitless, for they know not where to strike at the head of the unbeliever, and so they beat the air in their fury and howl like wild beasts. You wander among the stately tombs of the Caliphs and the Mamelukes, domed chambers with sculptured sarcophagi arranged in rows, and covered with faded and dusty canopies of satin and gold. Soft carpets are under foot between the tombs, so that the tombs look like some sort of quaint furniture in a living-room ; lamps overhead and divans to recline on—everything as cozy as possible, but over all hangs the deepest shadow of death. Why should it not be so in a country where they have been dying for so many thousands of years !

Very much might be written of the charming suburbs of Cairo. Heliopolis, with its solitary obelisk standing in a green meadow, the only surviving monument of the once famous city and the oldest obelisk in Egypt. Moses studied there ! There also is the sycamore tree in whose shade the Holy Family reposed during their flight into Egypt, and close at hand is the fountain where the Blessed Virgin washed the swaddling-clothes of the Blessed Infant. At the island of Roda

you are led to the spot where the rush-cradle of the baby Moses was rocked in the Nile waves; but somehow it is hard to convince one's self of the truth of these traditions, ancient and respectable as they are for the most part.

There is no doubt about the palaces of the Khedive; they spring up everywhere, and one is more ugly than another. An exception may perhaps be made in favor of Sezureh, on an island opposite Cairo. Extensive suits of chambers were lined with deep-blue satin, quilted on the walls, and folded in exquisite patterns on the ceiling, for the use of the Empress Eugénie when she visited the Khedive at the opening of the Suez Canal. Later the Emperor of Austria and the Prince and Princess of Wales were entertained in the same palace. But for the luxurious twilight of the rooms, the soft satin hangings, and the gardens of bamboos and palms that steal up to the windows and make music in their branches, the palace presents no novelty. Much of its furniture was exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1867, and it looks like exhibition furniture, rather theatrical. There is a kiosque in the garden, a wilderness of graceful pillars and Alhambra arches that are reflected in the waters of a small lake that washes its marble terrace. The apartments adjoining are sumptuous revelations of Eastern life. Gorgeous in color, voluptuous in design, you wander in delight from one hall of rainbows

to another till you are satiated with color, and then you reach the alabaster temple of the bath, filled with a soft rosy light that tinges the perfumed fountain like wine. In this royal kiosque the screech of the hyena and the hoarse growl of the enraged tiger fall lightly upon the ear. It is pleasant to bury yourself in a billowy sea of lemon-colored silk crusted with gold and breaking along the Persian carpet in golden fringes a yard deep, and to hear the wild snort of the rhinoceros and the shriek of the birds of prey, but all the while to know that they are bolted fast in their respective dungeons beyond the bamboo jungles.

There is a garden at Shoobra, where the citrons lie in golden profusion under the deep shade of the trees. At one end of this fragrant forest is a kiosque, a cloister that incloses a lake and a fountain. The marble shore of the lake is curiously carved ; you would think that every sort of living thing had crept out of the still water to sun itself at low tide. Lily-pads bask on the oily surface of the lake, shining crystal globes hang in the cloisters, and at the four corners of the kiosque are four retiring rooms, such as might cast a glamour over any sin and woo the most wakeful to repose. All this pleasure-house is withered like a flower that has served its end and been cast aside. At the other side of the garden is a hillock covered with spicy

trees. A muddy stream has been taught to make an island of the place. You cross a bridge that sinks under you treacherously; you ascend the marble stairs that are cushioned with moss; you pass entirely around a small palace in the perpetual dusk of its broad, semi-curtained veranda. The doors and windows are bolted securely; through the worm-eaten shutters you peer into the mysterious shadows that envelop and nearly absorb every object. Here is a dream of Oriental luxury, but a dream that would come to an end suddenly enough if the light of day were let into that deserted hall. The aquaria are all dry and half full of dust and sand; the painted lanterns are broken; the moth-eaten drapery hangs in ribbons from the heavy cornice, a thousand lizards and black creeping things dart out from under your feet at every step; the very sound of your footstep grows oppressive, and, when you stumble upon a green snake lying in an unwholesome coil at the foot of the stairs, you shudder and retreat. It is the palace of the Sleeping Beauty; but no prince in the flesh shall break the spell of her enchantment. Probably the guards fly to you at this moment—they did to me, and politely begged that I would withdraw immediately, as the harem had arrived and the gardens must be emptied. Swarms of eunuchs scoured the place, and not a shady bower but was probed with slender canes to see if it were defiled by the

profane presence of man. I heard light laughter, and saw through the bended boughs the white mask and the gazelle eyes of those pampered slaves of lust. Behold the soiled beauties of the harem, let loose for an hour to sport in the melancholy gardens of the East!

XI.

THE PYRAMIDS.

THE day of pilgrimage is about over. A half-dozen years ago the Pyramids of Gheezeh were approached by a winding trail that led through marshes and across a branch of the Nile. You were obliged to go out by donkey, for only a donkey could have made his way in safety along the slippery margins of the standing water pools left by the inundation. You were at times driven to boats, and had "numerous ventures by flood and field" before you came at last to the pyramid platform, and sank down in the shadow of Cheops to contemplate nature. But now! Your dragoman calls you in the cool of the morning. Coffee and rolls await you in the breakfast-room. A carriage and span with a champagne luncheon secreted under the seat is at the door. You light your cigar, sink back in the luxurious cushions, roll swiftly over a splendid macadamized road that

is built above high-water mark and threads an avenue shaded by trees, leap all the streams with the aid of excellent bridges, and in one hour and a half are set down at the foot of the steep ascent, only ten minutes walk from the Great Pyramid! For a long way out of Cairo, so long as the land feels the pulse of the life-bestowing Nile, your eye feasts upon the deliciously green meadows where the ibises in the distance shine like snow-flakes. Groves of palm are scattered along the horizon, the road winds through the edges of some of these groves, and from the mud huts of the fellaheen swarms of half-naked children buzz after you like bees. It is always the same cry of "Backsheesh," but the ear gets accustomed to it, and Egypt would be intolerably lonesome but for the hum of her two million slaves.

The business of climbing Cheops is begun as early in the day as possible; not that it is a long or a difficult task, but because the sun pours his hottest beams in a baptism of fire over the desert, and there is no shade, no breath of fresh and fragrant air, no cooling draught at hand. You alight at the base of Cheops and are immediately besieged by an army of Bedawees, who are famous bores. For more than forty centuries these Bedawees have besieged the pyramid-climbers from every quarter of the earth; they have a smattering of all languages at their tongue's end, and their hands are filled with old coins and new sca-

rabæi, which they swear are old. The sheik is your only hope; every village, every community, has its sheik, and his word is law. Purchase his friendship—you can do it with a couple of francs—and you are perfectly safe. He orders three of his "howling savages" to take you in hand, and conduct you to the summit of Cheops. According to the agreement with the sheik, you were to pay so much into his hands upon your return to earth, after having reposed as long as you think fit at the top of the pyramid. Meanwhile no fee is to be given to the three fierce and athletic fellows who help you up and down, nor are they to ask for any, on pain of the bastinado, in case any complaint is made against them. This being considered satisfactory by all parties concerned, you are seized under the arms by two of the Bedawees, while the third gives you a gentle poke in the small of the back from time to time. Once started on this novel ascent, it is quite impossible to abandon it before it is completed to the letter. You may repent and grow dizzy and short-winded, but the strong grip on your arms brings you to your feet again, and you are swung up from one terrace to another, hurried to the right and to the left by a zigzag trail that has evidently been searching for low steps and crevices in the stones, and found them in many cases. Each stone is about the height of a table; it is four hundred and sixty perpendicular feet to the top

of the pyramid, and you are permitted to rest about three times on the way up.

At first the Bedawee touches your right arm, and asks you if you would like to rest. You scorn the idea, and leap like a chamois from rock to rock, to show him how very far you are from feeling fatigued. He praises your powers of endurance, feels of your muscles, and says your legs are splendid. You realize that they must be, for you have evidently astonished him with your strength and agility. By and by he insists upon your resting for a moment only. You rest for his sake as much as your own, for you are a little out of breath, and fear that he, that all three of the attendants, must feel fatigued. At this moment a small boy makes his appearance with a jug of brackish water in his hand. He climbs like a cat, and is so little that his head is lost below the edge of each stair as he climbs toward you. That boy follows you to the top and pours water over your head and hands, and gives you a drink at the slightest provocation, and all for a half-dozen sous. He is getting his muscles in training for the ascents he hopes to make in years to come, for he is born under the pyramid, and he will die under it, some day, unless he happens to breathe his last at the top of it.

Before you are quite ready to start afresh the Bedawees clutch you, and you go bounding from step to step, sometimes finding foot-

hold for yourself, but oftener dangling in mid-air, with the fellow behind clinging to you instead of lending his aid. When you propose a second rest, you are put off with the promise of one a little farther up, and you nearly perish before you come to the spot. There is no pride of muscle, no ambition, no wind left in you now! You sink into a corner of the rock and shut your eyes, for you have caught a glimpse of the sandy sea that is all aglow in the fierce sunshine; and away down at the foot of the pyramid there are multitudes of black objects creeping about like ants, and you know these are men and women, and then you feel as if you could never get to the top of Cheops, and if you did, you know you could never get to the bottom again, unless you were to tumble head foremost down all those frightful stairs, and you grow faint, and call on the water-boy, and find life a good deal of a bore. You don't look down after that. You hum fragments of that unforgetable song, with its highly moral refrain "Excelsior," and begin to perspire profusely, and to feel as if you would probably lay your bones on the top stair and give up the ghost on the spot. Resignation or despair, you hardly know which, has completely cowed you. When you rest the third time one of the Bedawees kindly chafes your legs, straightens out the kinks in your muscles, and says pleasant things to you about the remainder of the jour-

ney. He points you to the top, which, sure enough, is only a little farther up, and you begin to wonder if it will be large enough to stand on, or if you will have to straddle it, and perhaps roll down on the other side. It is large enough to build a house on. I ached for a shelter of some sort while I was up there, and having looked over all the world of sand, with the blue Nile flowing through it between shores of emerald and fields of corn and groves of palm, I was glad to slide down into the narrow shadow under the highest step, and there rest for half an hour.

It was the place in which to dream gorgeous dreams, to conjure up the ghosts of the past and take long speculative looks into the future. But I did none of these. Some one was continually loading me with spurious antiquities, and imploring me to purchase at fabulous prices. When their prayers were unanswered, and I had grown weary of requesting them to shut up shop and retire from business, they turned on me with threats, and hinted ever so darkly that if I cared to return to my people with a complete skeleton, it would be well for me to reduce their stock in trade at as early an hour as convenient. They did drop in their prices; justice to them compels me to state that the handful of coins they at first offered at ten francs, they at last did not scorn to receive six sous for. We came to terms, and easily enough, for, as I felt assured of my safe-

ty, inasmuch as they were responsible for it, and as there is in my eye or my heart something that almost at once establishes an unswerving fellowship between any dark skin and myself, we struck hands very shortly and exchanged talismans, and the cry of backsheesh died upon their lips.

To be sure, that time-honored custom of the Bedawees, that confidential confession which they make to every traveler on his way down the pyramid, was made to me. I was sworn to secrecy of course, and then I learned how the sheik was quite a brute, and had plenty of money and lots of wives; how there were too many pyramid-climbers for the good of the craft, and how all the money that came to them was put into a general fund, out of which each of the too many Bedawees received his little share. Times were hard, and they couldn't eat sand for ever; would I therefore give them a little before we came quite to the bottom and say nothing about it, lest the sheik's wrath should be turned against them? I did it with pleasure; they were good fellows, spite of their audacious humbuggery. They were hard-working, cheerful, witty, and obliging fellows, and much jollier companions than the majority of tourists one falls in with in one's travels. When my legs gave out, which they certainly did on the way down, I was lifted bodily from one step to another, and beguiled with the gossip of the desert, and I felt, when they set me at last over

my boots in the sand, that it was a blessed thing to have been so near the sky on so solid a foundation — nearer the sky than is the dome of St. Paul's in London, nearer than St. Peter's in Rome, as near or nearer than the tower of Strasburg Cathedral, the highest tower in the world.

Who would bury himself in the bowels of that tomb of Cheops? Not I! There are tombs enough, and old temples under the sand that have their roofs broken open and know what fresh air and sunshine are. The blackness of darkness has been accumulating all these thousands of years in the breathless hollow of the pyramid, so that now a single sunbeam would be choked to death if it were possible for it to find its way in there. Your Egyptian darkness is bottled up in these mummy pits, to be felt and written about by people who don't know what it is until they have emerged from an exploration of the pyramid three shades blacker in the face, and with their mouths full of it. There was a tent pitched out in the desert. One must needs go twice or thrice to the Pyramids to grow used to their bulk before they will duly impress him. On my second visit I had resolved to see a sunset and a moonrise, both generously provided by Providence, and I repaired to that tent of the desert and slept the sleep of the just for a good part of the afternoon. I was awakened in the white heat of the noon, and saw the three pyramids trembling and changing color

in the irresistible flood of light that deluged them.

The Sphinx lost by comparison, and in the glare of day I was but feebly impressed with the magnitude of the image; moreover, the face is so shattered and the body so surrounded by sand drifts that it is difficult to get a distinct view of it. But at sunset, when the sky was as a rose in fullest bloom, and the distant Nile a ribbon of red gold, and the Pyramids were as live coals fanned with a soft breath, and the Sphinx was flushed with joy, I felt that there are some events in this life that never grow hackneyed, however often repeated. This was one of them. When I looked again there was a visible change: the flush went out of that scornful face; the hard lines were softened, the wrinkles smoothed away as the mellow moonlight fell upon it over the vast solitude of the desert. It matters little whether it be the image of man or woman, brute or human; the eternal mystery that enshrouds it is deepened, is hallowed, when the night gathers about it, and all the stars swim overhead in startling brilliancy, and all the sands stretch away to the horizon in drifts as white as snow.

One fact we are sure of—this is the most ancient idol of the East, a type of the first face, and one that will endure to the end of time, and will then fix its placid gaze upon the pitiful object writhing at its feet, the final victim of a per-

ishing world. We know that those melancholy eyes looked over the broad Nile waters from a lonely island, and saw the hordes of slaves that for ten long years toiled as the ants toil until they had built a monstrous caravansary that rose out the Nile to the solid platform of the island—three hundred and sixty-six thousand souls tugging at the mighty blocks of stone that were brought from the distant quarries of Arabia, and then the greater work began. For twenty years the army of workers heaved the great stones together, and at last the vanity of Cheops was satisfied, and he died and was embalmed and laid away in the heart of his pyramid. Cephren followed in the footsteps of Cheops, and his monument was a mountain. Then Mycerinus, the son of Cheops, ascended the throne, and the third pyramid towered above the desert. He was a mummy before its completion, but to-day it is the completest of the three. This Sphinx could tell us if it be truly the tomb of Mycerinus, or if the lovers of the fair but frail Rhodopis, whom Sappho calls Doricha, reared this royal sepulchre for her unhallowed manes; or yet if that fair virgin who was bathing in the Nile when an eagle swooped upon one of her sandals and flew away to drop it in the lap of the King as he sat at judgment was really the first Cinderella; for the King was so charmed with the diminutiveness of that sandal that he caused the country to be scoured in search of its owner, and he shared

his throne with her and built her a pyramid for ever. In those days this haggard face was comely, with rose tints upon the cheeks and a royal helmet upon the head. There was an altar beneath the heart of it, and the incense from that altar curled over the breast that is now buried in sand, and ascended to the nostrils that have crumbled away, and the swarms of slaves passed to and fro under the grateful shadow of the drooping wings. Pale in the moonlight, the proud head lifted to the stars that shine for ever in those latitudes, the sad face turned away from the mountains of stone that have grown up beside her. Ah! if the lips would but break their eternal silence, and reveal to us by what almost superhuman power the Pyramids were piled up into the sky! But no! she is a woman, and she will never tell.

XII.

MEMPHIS AND SAKKARAH.

All night the Sphinx kept silent watch over our sleepless camp. Again and again we stole into our tent and wrestled with the Angel of Sleep, but grew only the more wakeful in consequence of our exertions. Again and again we went forth into the desert and strode noiselessly to the base of the great solemn image, and felt the majesty of

its presence, and began to picture in the moonlight the splendid pageants of the past. The Pyramids rose, stone by stone, above the wind-swept plains, and the great army of toiling slaves crowded about us so densely that at last, overwhelmed, we returned to camp and stirred the fire into swift-leaping flames—for the dawn was chilly—and lit our pipes, and talked of the pilgrimage to Memphis and Sakkarah. Perhaps it was the moonlight that quickened our imaginations and made that night under the shadow of the Pyramids memorable; perhaps it was our deep bowls of Turkish tobacco whose incense curled about our camp a great part of the night; perhaps it was the marvelous, the bewitching atmosphere of Egypt, that is spicy and invigorating, and fraught with poetic legends, and filled with ghosts. The day breaks suddenly in the east and with little warning; the sky grows gray and silvery; then the horizon all at once flushes, and out of the desert rises the great sun, a rayless disk of gold that rolls up into the heavens, and the long day is begun. Before sun-up we folded our tents. In the horizon the peaks of the distant Pyramids of Sakkarah were already visible. Our path lay through the desert, and we were in the saddle betimes, for the desert is hot and blinding, and there is little to interest one after the novelty of the first half hour has worn away. Bound up in a cloak of coarse camel's hair, with a large kerchief of silk and wool

drawn over my head and face, leaving only my eyes exposed, I was lifted into the saddle in which I was about to make my first pilgrimage in the desert.

All this bundling is found to be of the utmost service in the fierce desert heat. You look as if you were sweltering, smothering under the thick cloak and the cumbersome, though graceful head-gear. On the contrary, you are as cool and comfortable as possible, and can endure the heat for a whole day without complaining. My camel was tied down in the sand, patiently awaiting his burden. You tie a camel to himself; that is, when he has shut up his legs under him like knife-blades, you slip a leathern bracelet over his knee, and there you have him, for it is impossible for him to open his leg so long as this bracelet is around it, binding the leg above the knee and the shin-bone together like a pair of tongs. Of course it is not easy to find anything in the desert to which you may tie your camel with security; a beneficent Providence has therefore made every camel his own hitching-post, likewise his own cistern and vegetable market and step-ladder—in fact, the camel is the most complete machine on four legs that we have knowledge of. His machinery is clumsy and needs oiling. His great joints show through his sides; his tail is the barest apology and unworthy of notice. You would think your camel went on stilts if you were to start off suddenly, sitting in a nest of luggage on that high

back of his. You would think he had his feet in poultices if you were to look at the soft, spongy things as they fall noiselessly on the earth and spread under his tottering weight. And that tearful face of his, with its liquid and pathetic eyes, and those deep cavities above them, big enough to hold a hen's egg; his aquiline nose with its narrow slanting nostrils that shut tight against the sand-storms and the withering *khamáseen* and give him a very scornful expression; the whole face looks as if it were just going to cry. The absurd under lip is puckering and pouting to the most alarming extent, and you are not at all surprised when the beast finally bursts into tears and cries, long and loud, like a great overgrown baby. This is the pudding-footed pride of the desert, whose silken hair is man's raiment, and whose milk is meat and drink.

While my camel was still kneeling, I stepped into the curve of his neck and went up the front stairs to the top of his hump. His saddle was a tree of wood with thick rugs lashed over it. It was a little like swinging in a sawbuck, riding that camel to Sakkarah. He edged his way over the desert, putting the two legs on one side of him forward at the same time, and then keeling over and pushing the other side ahead. I was continually rocked back and forth until my head swung loosely on my shoulders, my sides ached, and all my spine was sore. Many people are seasick when

they mount a camel for the first time. The motion is not unlike that of a small boat in a chopping sea. There is certainly no pleasure and very little elegance in your rest as you toss to and fro on the summit of that animated mountain of india-rubber.

The desert lay all before us, rimmed by the Libyan hills. We seemed to follow no definite path, but to travel by compass, taking an observation now and again from the tops of the desert mounds. Everything was of a color—a tawny white with a tinge of gold in it. We went down into valleys that were shadowless, and climbed hills that were blinding in the glare of the sun. Away off in the sea of sand, between the long waves that opened before us, we saw a dark line creeping slowly, slowly, and with an uneven movement. It looked precisely like a great black snake crawling out into the horizon. It was a caravan.

While we strode through the desert in silence, the sun growing hotter and hotter every hour, we met no one, no living thing, no bleaching skeletons, no objects of interest, nothing at all, until all at once we rounded a low hill and found ourselves close upon a solitary lodge in the vast wilderness. Three wolfish-looking dogs barked at us from the wall of the house. We drew nearer; a door was opened; there was not a window visible in the whole establishment. Two Bedawees stepped forth and gave us the graceful *salam* of the country.

This was the desert house of M. Mariette, who in 1860–'61 made his wonderful discoveries in this neighborhood.

. . . "There is also a serapium in a very sandy spot, where drifts of sand are raised by the wind to such a degree that we saw some sphinxes buried up to their heads, and others half covered."

Thus wrote old Strabo before the Christian era, and here Mariette built his lodge and set his men to work. The sphinxes came to light, an avenue of them, very much shattered of course, for they were thousands of years old. Down under the desert the men dug their way like moles into the subterranean halls of the Apis Mausoleum. In the palmy days of Memphis the sacred bull was worshiped in a magnificent temple and stalled in a palace. When he died, his embalmed body was placed in a huge stone sarcophagus and stored in one of the chambers of the Mausoleum. In a temple over the tombs sacrifices were still offered, and on certain anniversaries the great people came to worship, and placed tablets in the burial chambers commemorative of their visit. All this Mariette brought to light. Through the long halls of the Mausoleum the guide with his taper, that seems afraid to blaze in that Egyptian darkness, leads you from one sarcophagus to another in funereal silence. When you have seen about forty of them, and have grown faint in the close air, and are bored by sacred bulls or the shadow of them,

you return to the glare of the desert and wilt under the fierce heat of the sun.

The marvelous tomb of Tih is near at hand. There is a shadow there, and a royal chamber, sculptured, painted, and still fresh in form and color, though Tih gave up the ghost in the Fifth Dynasty, nearly four thousand years before Christ. The history, poetry, and romance of that ancient life enrich the walls of this tomb. Tih was a priest of Memphis; one who loved wholesome out-of-door sports, and was often in his boat decoying ducks, or taking fish in the Nile with drag nets, or walking among the farmers in harvest, sporting with his pet animals, sitting in state entertained by singers, dancers, and acrobats; or assisting at the services of the temple. He must have been a jovial priest, with his pet Numidian cranes, his fancy pigeons, his gazelles, and the fondness he had for games of every sort. At last he gave over the joys of Memphis, was swathed in linen and sweet spices, cased in wood and painted without in a thousand different colors, and then floated down the Nile on a death barge, and borne over the desert on sledges, and put away in a deep vault under this palatial tomb. You have it all in carved and tinted stone, this quaint page out of the Egyptian life five thousand years ago.

There are eleven pyramids on the Sakkarah plateau. They spring upon all sides; some

tower close at hand, two or three are in the middle distance, and then they grow beautifully less as they sink into the haze—the sand-laden wind of the desert. The effect is superb, to see pyramids in abundance, and nothing but pyramids, on a plain that is golden, undulating, shadowless, with never so much as a palm-tree to relieve the monotony; and above you the broadest, bluest sky imaginable, cloudless and painfully bright. There is a pyramid here, a little out of repair, but still not shabby, whose history is guessed at. If that history is true, then there is no monument on the face of the earth older than this; there is nothing to be compared with it. It is the foundation-stone of all that has followed in the history of mankind, of all that is yet to come. I believe you realize this as you pause under the pyramid, spite of the glare, the heat, the camel, and are rather glad to get away again and to hasten toward the edge of the desert, where the palms crowd together in great armies and wave their boughs of welcome.

You may ride all day among the palm groves, and over plowed fields where Memphis once stood, and you will not, if you are not forewarned, suspect that the glorious city lies under your feet, in the dust. There is not a trace of it left; these groves that make the land lovely to-day may be distantly related to the sacred groves for which Memphis was celebrated, but the half-dozen broken statues

that lie partially buried among them are stronger links that bind us to the past. The plowmen, thrusting their rude sticks into the soil, turn up the coins and amulets that are so ingeniously imitated nowadays, and the custodian of a rustic museum stored with minute fragments of sculpture is ever eager to part with his treasures at absurdly high figures. Memphis, for whose foundation the Nile was turned aside, has departed like its sister Alexandria, and left no sign. The Nile has come back to mourn over it, and to leave green pools of water under the groves, where the frogs croak and white ibises brood, and the snake sleeps. When the water flows back and the pools have been drunk up by the sun, there is a majestic figure of stone, prone on its face in the dust, that lies hidden in one of the grassy hollows. He stood thirty cubits high; he wore on his breast an amulet, and in his hand he held a scroll bearing his name, Amun-mai-Rameses. How are the mighty fallen! With his forehead to the earth—the last survivor of all the gods of Memphis—it might have been written of him as it was written of Sisera when he perished at the foot of her he loved. Yea! under these palms, the funeral plumes of the departed Memphis, Deborah might have raised her song of Amun-mai-Rameses and of Time who slew him: "At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell down dead."

XIII.

ON THE NILE.

Dahabeah Nitetis, on the Nile.

We are off at last and all adrift under the vertical sun. We are threading the tremendous artery that gives life to so many millions of people, working against a powerful current, an occasional calm, or a possible head wind; working slowly but surely southward toward the heart of Africa.

As I open this Nile log with an enthusiastic determination to write a vast volume before we return to Cairo out of the Nubian wilderness, I wonder where we will fetch up, and when, and how, and why. Just now it seems to me that I could sail on for ever as we have been sailing to-day, and for ever find a consolation in the thought that we are out of the reach of bad tidings, and have nothing to do but kill time in whatever way we see fit. Mr. H—— is our head man. It was he who rushed to and fro for a whole week looking for a barge to let, and finding the port of Boolak, which is the water front of Cairo, crowded with boats of every description. Many of them have already done duty this year—for we are late in the season—but are ready to do it again at a reduced figure. The proprietors of the Nile boats find it

a profitable speculation to have a small fleet on the river ready to set sail at the shortest notice. Mr. H—— secured one of these barges, which we are only too happy to call dahabeah as frequently as possible, because it sounds queer and we have but just learned how to pronounce it.

The Nitetis is a broad, flat-bottomed craft, one hundred and twenty feet in length. A cabin covers two thirds of her deck, a cabin with two saloons, several single and double state-rooms, a bath-room, and all the luxuries of first-class hotel life. There is a short mast in the bow of the boat, with a spar one hundred and seventy feet in length; a spar beginning close to the water on one side of the boat, crossing over the top of the mast, and then tapering away to a fine point that seems to rake the very stars. Just over the rudder is our other mast, with a small lateen sail, and on these two sheets hang all our hope of Nubia. The galley, which looks like a toy kitchen, is in the bow of the boat, open to the air—we fear no rain in this latitude — and the wonder is how such capital dishes can emanate from so primitive an establishment. The main deck is a complication of trap-doors. It is just the place for a pantomime, or something in the line of startling effects, sudden transformations, etc. The crew — captain, second captain, fourteen sailors, cook, vice-cook, and two cabin-boys, together with an excessively

small Arab, a son of the old captain, who is seeing the world for the first time—all these good and faithful fellows sleep on deck, unless they prefer to spring a trap-door on themselves and mysteriously disappear. We have also the dragoman, without whom it were vain to attempt the Nile, for the bother would make any economy a dear experience, more than counterbalanced by the wear and tear of nerves, coupled with a consciousness that the Arabs were getting the better of you day by day. Our dragoman, Michel Shyah, the white swallow among dragomen, a handsome and well-bred Syrian, has his assistant, one Yussef Amatury, of Beyrut, who has English and French at his tongue's end, and, though a boy, he was born and bred to the business of catering for others, and proves his ability almost every moment.

We of the cabin are ten in number. Four ladies shed their sweet influences over the adamantine hearts of five bachelors. Mr. H——, our head and front, is a victim of matrimony, but it is well to have something of the sort to stand as mediator between us. That is all our manifest manifests to the public eye, but there are nooks and corners in the cabin of the Nitetis that are stuffed full of good wines, good cigars, special jars of dainties, to be discussed between meals, and our bookshelves groan under their weight of precious volumes. A piano made its appearance at the last moment, and several easy-chairs were hurried on board just

as we were casting loose at Boolak. At this stage of the voyage we can think of nothing desirable which we have not within reach, and it now seems to us that all that is best in life has come up into the ship with us, two and two of every kind; we feel like saying to the wicked world on which we are turning our back: "Farewell; be happy, if you still have ingenuity enough to devise some new method of enjoyment. Be gay, poor worldling, but as for us we go hence in search of the peace which has escaped us hitherto. We are about to corner it somewhere in the African wilds!"

Then with a patronizing wave of the hand we lean over the quarter rail, ten of us in a row, and the great white sail of the bow spreads itself like an ibis wing, and the little sail in the stern follows suit. We swing off into the stream with a strange sensation, as if we were not quite sure of our reckoning—and what if we should never get back! A sudden flash from the lower deck, the sharp snap of a rifle, and Yussef tosses his tarboosh into the air, and cries "Hip! hip!" to the crew of dusky savages, who smile with all their fine white teeth in dazzling array. That is cue enough for them, and we have three rousing cheers that are echoed from the hollow courts of the great houses along the Nile bank. I don't remember how long this sort of thing continued.

We strode about the deck, the quarter-deck over the cabin, where we had room enough to stride in, and watched the palm groves on shore and hailed the barges that were continually passing us, for the Nile is crowded with boats, native and foreign. Then we began reading diligently, and read for ten minutes or so without stopping. Everything is still new to us. We have not yet got over the bazaar life of Cairo, which is so beautiful and so bewildering. We are only a few hours out on a voyage of two months or more. We don't know exactly what to do next. Some one goes to the piano, and a fragment of a Strauss waltz sets our feet in motion. Then Yussef reports the Pyramids just abreast of us, and we drop everything else and turn to the west, where, beyond the palm groves and the glassy pools that reflect them, we see the three pyramids, with the sun gilding one side of each and casting a deep shadow on the other. Sometimes the wind falls a little and our sails sag, and we are borne back by the strong current of the stream. At such seasons we all talk wildly of expeditions on shore, but by the time we have come to a definite conclusion as to the nature of these exploits—whether it be a pilgrimage to the Pyramids that keep staring at us from over the desert, or a picnic in the delightful grove by the shore, or a visit to a mud village that is perched on the edge of the high bank a mile or two up stream—by this time the wind rises again

and fills our sails, and we spring forward with a roar of waters under our bow and a white wave on each side of us.

A downward-bound dahabeah was reported at three o'clock. She hoisted the English flag and we threw out the Stars and Stripes. Yussef was on hand, of course, and as we came abreast in mid-stream, quite near to each other, we dipped colors and gave them a salute of three guns. To our amazement, they took not the slightest notice of us. There was no one on deck; the crew labored heavily at the long oars and droned out a doleful song—they always sing, these Arabs; and in ten minutes we were out of hailing distance, discussing with considerable warmth the political significance of this *snub*. Our enthusiasm was boundless. This is the first foreign boat we have met, and if those indifferent Englishers had given us half a chance we would have come to anchor in mid-stream, boarded them, loaded them with congratulations and late papers, and then brought them over to the Nitetis in royal style, and popped our best champagne in honor of the occasion. We conclude that the entire party has expired on the voyage, and the funeral barge is returning to Cairo in deep mourning. We are encouraged in this belief by the melancholy, the heart-rending accounts of the sufferings endured by passengers in dahabeahs, as published and diligently circulated by Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son

(and Jenkins), who have purchased the monopoly of the little Nile steamers.

Toward evening, when the wind had freshened, and we were dashing through the water in splendid style, all of a sudden we began to tremble violently, and then we came to a dead halt in the middle of the river. The braces were cast off immediately, and the great sails fluttered like immense banners. We were aground. There was not a shadow of doubt as to that fact, and I wondered how we were to get off again. The sailors ran up the shrouds immediately and climbed out on the long, slender spar, the point of which bent under them a little. Then they all began gathering in the sail by the armful, and singing, or rather chanting, a litany of their saints. It was a perpetual cry to Job, whom they call "Yob," for patience, and a responsive cry to Sarah, the wife of Abraham, though I don't know what she has to do with the nautical career of these Nile bargemen. "Sarah, Yob, Sarah, Yob," reiterated in little gasps by the double choir, who devoted themselves respectively to these worthy ancients, brought the snow-white canvas into its net of rope and fastened it securely to the spar. Down came the sailor-boys, as lithe as monkeys. The next moment these same boys threw off their scanty garments and leaped overboard. They were only waist-deep in the water, and yet the Nile banks were a quarter of a mile distant on

each side of us. The Nile barge has a heavy bow, built expressly with a view to butting in to sand-bars. The barge draws more water under the bow than anywhere else. When you run on to a bar you never run very deep into it, and the bow is all that sticks ; you generally swing around in the current as if you were hung on a pivot. The crew backed under our bow and put their shoulders to the boat. Then beginning their litany, "Yob and Sarah," they hoisted us off into the stream, where the current took us and bore us away so rapidly that the crew had to swim after us, which they did with the utmost jollity. They came out, sleek and glossy—splendidly built fellows of all shades of color, from the olive of the Cairene to the ebony of the Nubian. We were rapidly drifting toward Cairo, the current of the Nile is so powerful. Before the crew had time to resume their wardrobe, the old Rais, the captain, gave the order to shake out our canvas, and with one pull at the right rope the lashings on the sail unraveled like a sewing-machine stitch and the sail filled in a moment. "Job and Sarah" had nothing to do with this brilliant Nilotic feat. The more appropriate chorus would be "Wheeler and Wilson," "Willcox and Gibbs !"

Scarcely had our astonishment subsided, even in the midst of our mutual congratulation on the happy escape from the bar, when a second shock brought us all to our feet. Again the canvas

flapped wildly in the wind, and we turned aside to muse on wrecks and desert islands and other delicious horrors of our youth. It was a waste of sentiment, if indeed this delightful accomplishment is ever out of place, for the strong tide took us in its arms, as if it were sorry that we couldn't keep out of difficulty for a brief half hour, and we were backed off that shoal without disturbing either "Sarah or Job." Free at last! with sails full of soft Arabian airs and the sun fast sinking to his desert bed! Dinner on deck under the awning and the wind sighing itself to sleep—a dinner such as one reads of in fairy tales of travel. Michel, the soft-eyed Syrian, gorgeously arrayed in vestments of purple and fine linen, stood by, praying that our appetites might last for ever, and that Providence would graciously grant him the privilege of satisfying us. Yussef was there in scarlet tarboosh and Oxford ties—for Yussef has burst the bonds of his nationality, and aspires to American—yes, even Californian—styles. Yussef waves a tuft of ostrich feathers over the "banged" forelocks of the fair, and is a great ladies' man. Habib flies to and fro and offers us course after course of dainty dishes that have come just from the hands of Antoine, the cook from Bagdad. There is magic in that word, for no one but a magician could conjure dinners such as ours from the pocket kitchen in the forecastle.

More pyramids for dessert, Sakkarah and all that, and a golden haze glorifying the forest palms of Memphis. Music meanwhile; soft songs of love, softer in the lips of these dark lovers than honey in the honeycomb; weird songs, whose melodies floated vaguely on the air like Æolian harp music. The eyes of the singers are shut in ecstasy as they sit in a circle under the shadow of the great sail; their hands beat time and their heads wag to the jingle of the shuddering *tar* and the deep throb of the *darabukkeh*. A twilight steals on us unawares, for we are all dreamers now. Just ahead of us is a great bend in the river, beyond which the wind drops dead and the current hurls us up under a beetling crag. The music ceases; we all rush to arms; with our hands we have touched the shore; the earth is ground off and drops in at our open windows as the strong tide crowds our barge upon the shore. Now, Sarah! and now, Job! and others of your holy tribe, help these poor fellows who are groaning in spirit as they struggle to deliver us out of our peril. Free at last; a sudden silence falls on us. We drift with the current, and, looking up along the crest of the cliff at whose base we had been humbled, there tower the rugged walls of a Coptic convent. It was like a grave for stillness; a few palms mourned over the solitude of the place and looked at their reflections in the water; the moon hung in their

branches, but shed no ray upon the forlorn battlements that have been set against the fierce splendor of this Egyptian world—they were in deep and impenetrable shadow. Music again arose upon the breathless night; Madame had stolen to the piano unobserved, and with the sympathetic touch of the artist she rendered the "Moonlight Sonata."

O Egypt! O Nile! O Beethoven! in the yellow moonlight under the brooding palms! We drifted to a safer shore and folded our wings like a night-bird; for the wind was dead. And the evening and the morning were the first day!

XIV.

AN ARABIAN NIGHT.

DAHABEAH NITETIS, ON THE NILE.

As the novelty of our voyage wears off we begin to look forward to the choice hours of the day with joyful anticipation. The world is forgotten. We never speak of it now, unless in recalling some episode in our past life, which seems to us like a dream. Doubtless the state of the weather has much to do with this spiritual repose which we enjoy in common at intervals. Meanwhile there are occasional bursts of enthusiasm on

the part of some one member of our party that seem to us unwarranted, not to say inexcusable. Some folk are as sensitive as hair-triggers, and they not unfrequently "go off half-cocked." Happily, I don't travel with a mouthful of exclamation points, and the equilibrium is preserved on board. Dinner is an event in our lives these days, but dinner happens to reach its crisis just at twilight, and there is nothing in all Egypt better than sunset and the after-glow and the divine night that follows. Last night the sun went down in a yellow mist that hung over the desert like a veil. It seemed as if the ancient mysteries were concealed beyond it, and that all the glow was the flame and the lurid smoke of sacrificial fires. I fancy it would not be very difficult to turn heathen in this heathenish land.

Its superstitions begin to tell upon some of us already, in spite of two clerical fellow voyagers who are supposed to stand between us and perdition. After that sunset came the exquisite twilight and one of the landscapes peculiar to the Nile coast. Looking east over the water, which was as blue as the sea, the eye fell first upon a strip of juicy green meadow-land. Beyond it, a few miles back—two or three, perhaps—rose a low range of hills as bare as chalk and of the color of dust-powdered snow. The sky just above the hills—they were the Arabian hills—was of the brightest blue with a silver luster over it all.

There was a soft, rose-colored cliff to the left, and above, in the middle distance, in the midst of the plain beyond the meadow, stood a solitary tomb with its low dome and one melancholy palm beside it, the tomb and the palm as brown as chocolate, and not a living or moving thing in all that half of the visible world. By and by a thin, filmy haze gathered over the scene and absorbed it in tranquil and pathetic silence. The immense stars came forth suddenly, and seemed to float in mid-air, very close to us. You might almost have heard them twinkle, they were so big and so brilliant. There were subdued voices in the cabin. Busy pens flew over the paper, inditing letters to that tedious world we have turned our backs upon or filling up page after page of the Nile journals, that shall hereafter wring our hearts with too fond memories of these shores.

The crew dozed on the deck below me as I curled up in the corner of a deep divan, with my cigar alight, waiting for the late moonrise. The shadow of the big stars plunged in the river, or threw long golden wakes on the water that reached to the other shore. Barges drifted by us—mysterious barges, that came like phantoms out of the shadow and resolved their colors into shadow again; but not until we had hailed them, and learned from them how the changeable bars lay among the currents just above us. Sometimes an animated conversation was continued long

after the passing barge had faded away in darkness, and the voices returned to us out of the air, growing fainter and fainter, like oft-repeated echoes.

There was a wild gorge in the Arabian hills, where the chain drew near the shore. As we approached it, I saw that it was flooded with mellow light. Soft breezes bore us slowly against the river current, and we noiselessly approached the mouth of the gorge. Oh, vale of wild enchantment! Fantastic crags leaped into the air and hung suspended by some mighty magic. Between the golden walls, in the bed of the valley, a grove of palms rustled their plumes in the delicious air, and just above these palms rose the splendid moon. Every leaf was lustrous in its light; every rock sparkled faintly, and out of the mouth of the valley poured a deluge of light, in which we were all crowned with glory and transfigured. Our barge was silver, our sails of softest silk, and bright flames played upon the waters under us. It was one of the gates of Paradise! There was a great bend in the river, beyond the valley, and when we had rounded it those gates were closed on us for ever and ever. The moon climbed up into heaven and did what she could to smother the stars; they are not easily outshone in these crystal skies. The cabin went to sleep in a body. I hung about the ship, and burned my weed with the

spirit of one who offers a sacrifice to some adorable but invisible object. I scented the incense of the nargileh and heard the water bubbling in the shell of the cocoanut pipes. I knew that the hasheesh-eaters were sleeping their fatal sleep (we have six of them in our crew). Very shortly one of these slaves of sleep began muttering to the moon in a kind of sing-song that attracted about him an audience of intent listeners. The story-teller reclined on his bed of rugs between decks; the hatch was drawn back, and a great square of moonlight brought him into strong relief. Dark Nubians lay at full length on the deck, and listened as stealthily as spies. Two or three of the hasheesh-eaters sat near and applauded the narration with foolish delight, chuckling to themselves continually, and filling up the pauses in the narration, when the narrator seemed to have dropped fast asleep, with expressions of their complete satisfaction. Yussef was near me; we were leaning together over the rail, looking down upon the picturesque group below. He gave me, in his literal translation, fragment after fragment of this thousand and second tale just as it came from the lips of that hasheesh dreamer under the moonlight on the Nile.

CHAPTER I.

There was a king in Egypt who had three sons. About his palace was a royal garden; in

a chosen corner of the garden stood an apricot tree beloved of the King. Now, when it was summer, and the fruits were ripening, the King grew sorrowful, and sat alone in his chamber day after day; so his sons went in to him, and said, "Sire, why sit you sorrowful and alone in the pleasantest days of the year?"

The King answered, "Behold, my apricots ripen, but as fast as they ripen they disappear in the night, and my life has become a burden to me in consequence of this thing."

The elder son said, "Be of good cheer; I will watch with the tree this night, and bring you the ripest fruit at daybreak."

"God is great!" exclaimed the King, stroking his beard. His three sons kissed his hand and withdrew.

CHAPTER II.

When it was evening, the elder son went out and sat under the apricot tree, and bent his watchful eye among the branches; the fruit ripened, but while it was very still the watcher slept, and when he awoke at dawn all that was ripe had been plucked out of the branches: and the King mourned again.

Then spoke the second son: "Sire, I will watch to-night!" So he watched and slept, and between watching and sleeping the tree was robbed again.

On the third night the third son said : "Let me watch ; it may be I shall save the fruit."

Then they laughed at him, for he was young and handsome. But at night he girded on his sword, and took in his hands a ball of snow, and went out to watch. Placing the snow in a branch of a tree, he lay down under it. When he slept, the melting snow fell, drop by drop, on his eyelids, and he kept watch until midnight. At midnight he heard a movement among the branches. The stars were bright, but he saw nothing. He arose and cut the air with his sword, till he heard a cry of pain, and the ripe fruit fell at his feet.

At daybreak he returned to the palace, offered his trophies to the King on a tray of ebony set with jewels, and the King fell upon his neck and kissed him.

CHAPTER III.

The youngest son said to his brothers, "Let us capture the thief." He took with him his sword and a long cord, and went out to the apricot tree ; the ground was stained with blood, and the three followed the bloody stains till they came to the mouth of a deep pit. The youngest son tied the rope about his waist, and his brothers let him down into the pit, deeper and deeper, until he came to a cave in the side of it. The floor of the cave was blood-stained, and he entered cautiously, and groped about until he came upon

a marvelous garden in the under-world. In the midst of the garden was a palace, and in a window of the palace sat a lady of such beauty that the boy exclaimed at it. She turned to him with unfeigned joy, and cried, "Abdallah" (it was his name), "at last we meet!"

Then she bade him steal in at the palace door and find a genie sleeping in a lower chamber. "Smite him as he sleeps," said she; "but, when he bids you smite again, beware, for the first blow is fatal, the second restores him to life."

Abdallah entered the palace chamber and smote the genie, who cried, "Smite again!" And then he died in his own blood.

The fair lady fell upon Abdallah's breast, and tore from her arm a bracelet of wonderful workmanship, which she clasped upon his wrist as a token.

Together they returned to the mouth of the cave, and the lady sat in a noose while the brothers drew her out of the pit.

When the rope was let down again, Abdallah seized it, but the brothers, who were filled with envy, no sooner felt his weight upon the rope than they let it drop, and Abdallah fell into the bottom of the pit.

CHAPTER IV.

Stunned and bruised, Abdallah lay for some time on the heap of rubbish at the bottom of the

pit, which had fortunately broken his fall. When he had sufficiently recovered, he looked about him and discovered another cavern close at hand. He entered, threaded its mazes, and came at last into a great lovely land, through which he wandered hour after hour. Faint with hunger and thirst, he hailed with joy the low walls of a cottage standing under a distant hill.

A woman sat alone in the doorway. He begged of her a draught of water and a morsel of bread. These she gave him, but added: "Drink little, O stranger! for our fountain is guarded by a dragon who is so watchful that only when he sleeps can we obtain our life-giving water." Abdallah offered his services to the good woman in return for her kindness, and was directed to her flocks over the brow of the hill, and warned to keep them from the jaws of the hungry dragon. The lad went out with his sword and drew the goats about him. He wandered from one hill top to another until he came to the dragon's fount, and there he paused. The dragon slept with his huge paw over the mouth of the fountain, so that little or no water escaped from under it. Abdallah approached with caution, having first taken in his arms a young kid, and, when his step awoke the dragon, he threw the kid into the open jaws. At that moment he rushed upon the monster and slew him with a dexterous thrust in a vital part, and then returned to the old woman and related

his adventure. No sooner was the good news known in that wonder-world than the King summoned the young victor, and, having embraced him, pressed upon him a favorite daughter and a royal palace, but these gifts were refused by Abdallah, who desired only to be restored to his own people.

"That is beyond my power," said the King, sadly, and he gave the boy a splendid garment and a purse of gold.

Then Abdallah went forth into the lonesome land, and when it was in the heat of the day he entered a forest to seek repose. A great serpent swung from a bough across his path. There was a fierce battle, but Abdallah won, and the serpent fell dead at his feet in a heap of glittering coils. Fearing to enter the forest, he threw himself on the grass and fell asleep. The sun stole on him as the hours waned, and when he awoke he found himself covered by a deep shadow. Lifting his eyes, he beheld an enormous eagle hovering over him, and protecting him from the sun with its wings.

"Thanks," said the eagle; "you have put to death my enemy, who for many seasons has climbed into my nest and devoured my eaglets: what service can I render you?"

Abdallah cried with joy, "O eagle! bear me to my kingdom in the upper world."

The eagle answered, "Kill yonder sheep, cut

it in pieces and place it on my back; then mount beside it; when I turn my head to the left, feed me, and when I turn my head to the right, feed me!"

Abdallah did as he was commanded, and with one sweep of his mighty wings the eagle, spite of his burden, sped swiftly through the air!

CHAPTER V.

The wood and the meadow grew shadowy under them as they winged their way through space. By and by the eagle turned his head to the left, and Abdallah put meat into his beak; anon he turned to the right, and was fed again.

They soared on and on, and the eagle was fed until the last morsel of flesh had disappeared. Again, the eagle looked back for food. In a moment Abdallah had seized his sword and cut a bit of flesh from his thigh; this he gave his deliverer, and they continued their airy journey.

When the night was come and gone, and it was broad daylight, the eagle descended in the edge of the city where Abdallah lived.

"Abdallah," said the eagle, "you have fed me with your own flesh; replace it and the wound will heal," and with that the bird put out of his beak the flesh with which it had been fed. "Take also," it added, "a feather from under my wing, fasten it to your spear, and, when you hunt, your aim shall be fatal."

Abdallah plucked the feather and bound up his wound, and, when he turned to thank his deliverer, the black wings of the bird were already fading in the heavens.

CHAPTER VI.

When Abdallah had sought a café, to regale himself with the nargileh and the gossip of the town, he learned that on that very day the King's elder son, his brother, would wed a mysterious fair lady, and that the tournament would be more splendid than any ever before known in the kingdom. He sought the arena at once. He seized a javelin, and barbed it with his magic plume. The King and the fair lady sat in state. The King's sons entered the arena and haughtily challenged the populace. No one responded but Abdallah, who strode proudly to the foot of the throne, and prostrated himself. The trumpet summoned to the test. Abdallah toyed for a moment with his fatal spear, and then slew his antagonists, one after the other.

In a moment he made himself known to his royal father and his bride. Her token was proof of his identity, and the marriage feast, instead of coming to an untimely close, was prolonged for seven days and seven nights, during which time wine flowed as water and all the luxuries of life were free.

When the story was ended we were all silent. The wind filled our sail, but we seemed scarcely to move in the water, there was such a stillness brooding over us. While we were waiting for an event to unseal our lips, we were startled by the unmistakable crash of timber and cries of despair that came to us over the water. I had scarcely time to turn to Yussef, who was still at my side, and cry "What was that?" when our sail began to swell and the water to roar about us in a momentary gale. The ropes were loosened immediately. Every soul in the ship was on the alert in ten seconds, but we had a narrow escape. These wind-bolts fly out of the mountain gorges and take you when you are least prepared. They tear the great lateen sails from the masts, drive smaller boats on shore, and sometimes wreck the heavily laden barges that trade between the Nile ports. We escaped with only a little fright, but our neighbor was damaged considerably. Her loss was our gain, as it happened. Had we been to windward, lapped in the lazy dream of the "Arabian Nights," we might have seen our hundred and seventy feet of spar borne into the air like a winged javelin, and where would our Nubia have been then, and our cozy sleep that came a little later while we were tied up under a high bank waiting for sunrise?

XV.

EGYPTIAN VILLAGE LIFE.

DAHABEAH NITETIS, ON THE NILE.

THE delicious days drift by unreckoned. Hour by hour we cast off the customs of our time, one after another, and grow luxurious and sensuous, taking in the landscape as if it were something that was provided for our physical enjoyment. The soul is in a transition state. It sleeps in its cocoon. But in that sleep it is putting forth new wings, and the old life of the New World can never again seem to it the same as of yore. When a man puts the Nile between him and his former self, he has turned into his heart a mighty flood, the secret sources of which may be the windows of heaven for aught we know; and though that heart were as foul as the Augean stables, if it be a whole heart, it shall become whiter than snow.

We don't give ourselves up to the physical luxury of this inland voyage without suitable mental preparation. There are plenty of books built expressly for these latitudes. You find them in the hands of every passenger, and the text is the chief subject under discussion at table, at tea, in the twilight or dark, and at frequent intervals between meals. Look at our shelves and you will see Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, and Wilkinson's

"Ancient Egyptians." With these romantic records of the life that was we lay a foundation for a proper appreciation of the life that now is.

Here is Lane's "Modern Egyptians," which we fly to as if it was the very Bible of Egypt—only we go ever so much oftener inasmuch as it is not—"Eothen," Curtis's "Nile Notes," the works of Warburton, Piazzi-Smyth, Lord Lindsay, Curzon, Stanley, Macgregor, Prime, and poor Lady Duff-Gordon, who drifted to and fro over these waters, year after year, patiently awaiting that death that continually threatened her. We have what I have found the most charming book of all, the "Diary" of the late Harriet Martineau. I do not suppose we have read one half of these books, but there is a consolation in being supplied when you are pushing out into the undiscovered land; a land which is as fresh to you as if no eye but yours had been permitted to question its wonderful hieroglyphics. We bury ourselves in the depths of the divans on deck, under the awning, fill our laps with books, and then turn our smoked glasses on the shimmering landscape and are lost in reverie.

As the river is continually bending to east or to west, we drift from shore to shore. The strong north wind bears us steadily, and often very rapidly, against the powerful current, but when the wind falls we fall with it, and immediately take to our canvas and consider the pros-

pects. If there is not a head wind we are safe, for we can send our men on shore and be towed up under the bank as tamely as if this were the Erie Canal instead of the mighty Nile. Tacking is hard work; from ten to fifteen miles a day is all we can hope for in the best of tacking weather. If the wind is from the south, there is nothing left for us but to tie up to the bank and wait for better luck. Yet this is by no means bad luck. At such times, unless there is a high wind full of flying sand, we go on shore and walk for miles and miles through the green fields and among the palm groves. We are seldom alone—all the shore of the Nile is thickly populated. We pass villages almost every hour, on one side of the river or the other. There are scattered houses under scattering palms—the homes of shepherds and of husbandmen, and of the slaves who toil night and day at the shadoof, giving the thirsty earth to drink from this fountain of perennial life.

There is good shooting on either hand, and we have a couple of good shots to match it. Yussef is ever ready for the chase, and "Bambino," the pet bachelor of the crowd, can wing his pigeon not infrequently. When we approach a village the rifles are got in order, for the shooting is immense in the vicinity. Every Egyptian village seems to have been built solely for the accommodation of some millions of pigeons. Their houses rise like towers about the suburbs, and are far

more imposing than the habitations of their keepers. The pigeon towers are built of repeated layers of earthen pots, with the mouth on the inside of the tower. Numerous dry branches are inserted in the outer wall for perches, and the walls, which are of mud, are frequently whitewashed. The birds are kept for their guano, which is used for fuel. One can not burn trees on the edge of the desert. Many of the pigeon towers look not unlike the pillars of old temples. They are the chief feature in every landscape, and, when we look over the palms that have crowded down into a long point in the bend of the river and see blue clouds of pigeons blown across the sky, we listen for the click of Yussef's rifle, and know that "Bambino" is meditating a slaughter of the innocents. The Egyptian pigeon, when it comes to drink, lights in the Nile like a duck and rises like a sea-gull. One might easily slaughter a half bushel at a single broadside, by merely letting fly into a swarm of them as they settle in the water close to shore. We did it once or twice, and saved the spoils with the aid of a half-dozen little naked Arabs, who plunged in and secured them for us. Though our table is seldom without pigeon-pie, freshly stocked at almost every village we come to, no one has as yet made any objection to our helping ourselves in consideration of a fee by no means exorbitant.

Turning over the pages of my journal, I am

amazed to find how slight the incidents of the voyage have been thus far, and yet how full of lazy experience. We have taken several towns by storm, and surprised the sleepy inhabitants at all hours of the day and night. At Feshun we came to shore in splendid style, running up so close to the bank that a beetle might have come on board without wetting his feet. We wanted milk and eggs, and some other palatable trifles, and so we stopped for ten minutes; and how we astonished the easy-going Mussulmans with our absurd jollity!

Maghagha, only fourteen miles farther up stream, might have been reached in a couple of hours, but it wasn't. The wind dropped; our men went on shore, took a long rope over their shoulders, and tugged away for four hours. They called on their saints in soft, melancholy voices, that sounded to us on board like the drone of bees. Sometimes one of them would let go the rope, drop down on the grassy bank, and refresh himself with a cigarette. Sometimes they all came to a halt and squatted in a row, chatting and laughing and calling to us in such good humor that it is difficult to believe tracking is not the jolliest sport in the world. Little puffs of wind spring up from time to time, and the barge responded so generously that we ran ahead of our team on shore, and they were obliged to cast off the rope and follow us at a brisk trot. The wind finally

dodged ahead of us, and we were booked for the night. Maghagha was indefinitely postponed.

After hours of toil, when the crew seem so fatigued that the man of feeling is apt to have his heart wrung, the toilers finish their duties and sit down under the big sail to sing and laugh, and even dance their fantastic dances, as if they were in the midst of a holiday. Their good nature, coupled with their willing spirit, is a perpetual subject of amazement to us all. With the dawn we came upon Maghagha just in season for the morning milk. Half a dozen girls brought bottles of it to the river bank, and awaited the passing customer that was sure to slacken sail for a moment or two at least. At Minieh it was already dark when we tied up for the night, but a procession of lanterns was speedily formed, and we strolled through the narrow and crowded streets, which were blockaded with bazaars, and finally came home to the Nitetis with an escort of half a hundred Arabs, big and little, howling at our heels.

Every town furnishes an armed guard for the protection of the boats that lie by the shore through the night. There are always two at least, so that one may keep the other awake. They light a bonfire and hover over it these cool nights, and challenge the specters that haunt their dreams, and sometimes startle us all, and the whole village as well, by discharging a rifle in the dead stillness of the night. Ten thousand dogs lift up their voices

in response, and the night is hideous from that hour. Indeed, the perpetual barking chorus that falls upon your ear as you course the Nile is sufficient to lead you safely into port, though it were the blackest night in Egypt. That signal is more effective than forty fog-whistles.

There are Coptic convents, planted on the shores, and so walled about that no signs of life are visible. Perhaps a solitary palm stretches its head above the convent wall and waves its gray plumes, like flags of distress. A half-witted Arab swam out to us three days ago, and was on board for an hour, to the great delight of the crew. This man, who was a splendid specimen of physical development, leaped into the river some distance ahead of us, and climbed over our stern by the rudder-post. Then, unwinding his turban, he girded it about his loins and came forward to salute us. Our old captain fell upon his breast and kissed him repeatedly. Every one of the crew had his turn at the saint, for the simple are thought sacred in this country. Having broken bread with the sailors, who were as happy as children with this new plaything, he again embraced them all, put his wardrobe on top of his head, and dropped overboard. When we last saw him he was struggling with the strong current, which the Arabs fear, but, as he was an excellent swimmer, he surely reached the shore in safety. At several villages we met these sacred idiots, who are always highly

esteemed. They frequently bear around with them the turban or a fragment of some garment of a dead saint. Wrapping this about a long staff, they beg from town to town. On one occasion a woman followed us for half a mile, running along the shore with a sheik's relic on a pole. She was rewarded with a liberal contribution of black bread which the crew tossed over the water to her. Nor do we lack other visitors these days. Wives and mothers of the male relatives of the crew make their appearance at the lucky moment, and we run into shore to allow our sailor-boys a brief embrace.

Dahabeahs salute us, and we have grown indifferent to their salutations. We begin to realize that we were a set of very enthusiastic Americans, as unused to the Nile as possible, during that first exciting week of the voyage. At present we are as indifferent as any one on the river; yet we have exchanged visits with some few strangers who chanced to come to land at the same time and place with us. Our second captain sustains the reputation of our ship for amiability. He has a line of wives along the whole Nile coast. They are located at convenient intervals, and nothing but a head wind can interrupt the continuous joy of his domestic life. If we find that we are losing the best part of a stiff breeze; if we are ashore when we should be afloat; if we are apparently hunting up all the sandbars in the river and hanging to them as we never hung before, we know that the

second captain has repaired to some bosom or other of his family, and that the man at the mast-head may cry "Rais Mustapha!" till his throat splits and the winds are weary with his crying, but that second captain will salute the "light of his harem" with as much deliberation as if there were but one of her.

And so we come to Siout, the capital of Upper Egypt, two hundred and fifty miles from Cairo; Siout, successor to the ancient Lycopolis, "the city of the wolves"; Siout, with its fourteen minarets; its choice bazaars, than which even Cairo has few finer; its groves of palm and sycamore and acacias; its camels that swing through the narrow streets, laden with bales of rich goods, and drive you to the wall as if a Christian had no rights in a city of five-and-twenty thousand souls, but a single thousand of whom are Christians. The clay pipe-bowls of Siout are world-famous. You see the skillful workmen in the bazaars molding the soft clay into dainty shapes and staining them with scarlet dyes. You see the treasures that are brought by caravan from Darfoor and the very heart of Africa. You breathe the perfumes of Arabia, and your soul is satisfied with the sight of latticed windows and dark flashing eyes; with handsome men and lovely boys, such as the Arabian poets celebrate in sonnets; with mosques and open courts cooled by babbling fountains, and by the picturesque life of the East

which is so well displayed here. Then you get out of the city through winding streets nearly roofed over by the houses that lean toward one another, and dodge a second camel with its cumbrous freights. (Do you remember how Amina made excuse for the wound in her cheek when the young merchant kissed her too savagely? Turn over your Arabian tales, and when found, etc.) And, crossing the green meadows of the Nile, you climb the cliffs above the town and muse on the historic tombs beneath you. Here the ancient Christians found sanctuary; here the prophetic John of Lycopolis dwelt above fifty years in a cell "without once opening the door, without seeing the face of a woman, without tasting any food that had been prepared by fire or any human art." At your feet lies the lovely town, submerged in its green garden. As far as the eye can reach the broad Nile turns again and again, casting a green shadow into the desert, the desert that like a sea flows to this green shore, its tawny waves bursting through the walls of the City of Sepulchres, close at hand, submerging half the tombs in sand. Away yonder, over the rim of the horizon, there are island oases, but who shall find them save the Bedawee, who have a mariner's knowledge of the stars?

The breath of evening ascends to us, sweet with the odor of oranges and limes; it comes to us over the sandy waste at the foot of the crags,

where there are skulls bleaching and a litter of human bones, but the sand and the winds and the jackals have cleansed them of all impurities, and they are no longer even ugly to look at. In this Egyptian Eden, under the shadow of this hermit-haunted hill, tradition whispers that the early youth of our Lord was passed after the flight from Palestine.

XVI.

TEMPLES AND TOMBS.

DAHABEAH NITETIS, ON THE NILE.

WHAT would I not give could I again experience the emotion I felt at my first sight of an Egyptian temple! Fortunately the dusk had thrown a veil over us, and in the exquisite delicacy of the fading light we drifted slowly up the mysterious river through the dreamy land, and saw on the eastern shore a cluster of immense columns towering against the sky. I believe we passed it without uttering a syllable. The serene silence of the evening was intensified by the solemnity of this ruin, and, as we were borne away from it before the gentle breeze, we heard from time to time the plunging of some object in the river, the splash of the water, and then all was silent again. Later we grew so familiar with this sound that it

ceased to attract any comment whatever. It was the tribute of the earth to the inexorable current of the stream. From year to year the river changes its course. Eating away the shore on the one hand, it deposits a soft bed of soil on some sandy bar, and there the watchful husbandman—who keeps his finger on the pulse of the river and notes every change in it, even the slightest—lays open the furrows in this new gift of the bountiful Nile, and in a few days the sun is magnetizing the young shoots of the cucumbers and melons that will presently have stretched their slender stems to the water's edge. The Nile is wearing away the bank below this temple, Kom Umboo, and by and by those superb columns, that have stood there in their desert solitude for thousands of years, will bow their lofty capitals and topple over into the stream. Again and again we come upon villages that have been undermined. Houses that were built at a reasonable remove from the water have lost their outer walls, and stand on the brink of total destruction with their shattered chambers open to the sun. Like a great serpent, the river unfolds its glistening amber coils as it creeps through the valley, swaying from side to side. Sometimes it flows under abrupt cliffs that are perforated with mummy chambers, tier upon tier. It is often difficult to climb the steep walls of the mountain, and enter these tombs; nor is it profitable in many instances, for the caves are despoiled

of their antique treasures, and are now half filled with sand and haunted by clouds of filthy bats.

The tombs of Beni Hassan are cut in one of the hard strata of a hill that lies to the east of the Nile bank, about a mile distant. The river once flowed much closer to the base of the hill, but has turned back again into the plain, and left a deposit of rich soil that is just now covered with waving grain, breast-high, as we plow through it on our donkeys, and is of the most brilliant green. As we threaded palm groves, and hailed each other over the grain that was tossing in the wind, and rolling green billows from end to end across the broad fields, we were cautioned by our considerate donkey-boys to keep a discreet silence, inasmuch as this district has a bad reputation, and has long been infested by Bedawee brigands. Up one of the lonely gorges of the hills we actually saw the black tents of the tribe, but no one sought to molest us. They were less fortunate who visited the grottoes in former years, and so incorrigible had the Beni Hassanites become that the Ibrahim Pasha caused the whole village to be destroyed. It looked like a small edition of Pompeii, as we rode through it on our return from the tombs.

The houses were all roofless, windows and doors wide open, many walls entirely thrown down, and the whole a picture of melancholy desolation. We rode single-file through the ruins,

picking our way among mud blocks and fragments of wall nearly as large as our donkeys. Several times we passed directly through houses, in at one door and out at the other. No one thinks of restoring any part of the old village; in fact, the survivors are more pleasantly situated in a fine palm-grove a couple of miles removed from the ruin. The grottoes of Beni Hassan are, next to the Pyramids, the oldest known monuments in Egypt. The fact scarcely suggests itself as you enter these chambers, hewn out of the solid rock, plastered and elaborately frescoed. The colors are almost as bright to-day as they were when the artist—who, by the way, has been mummified these fifty centuries—concluded his contract and drew his ducats. On a background of the most delicate shades of green there are infinite multitudes of figures, portraying all the manners and customs of that ancient life. Even then there must have been dwellings of pretentious architecture, for they are imitated here. Stone architraves extend from column to column. Possibly, at that time, it was thought impossible to sustain a roof without them, though it were a mountain over your head. A little later, as in the tombs at Thebes, the architraves are omitted. Here stand columns hewn out of the living rock in the earliest Egyptian style. Naturally, they are copies from nature—the stalks of four water plants bound together and crowned with lotus or

papyrus buds. It is miraculous that any part of these tombs is left, save the bare hollow, inasmuch as the painting may be easily effaced, the plaster removed in slices, and the rock itself cut with the blade of a penknife. The insignificant names that one is sure to stumble upon, where they are least worthy to be found, have begun to creep over the delicate paintings in these tombs; and now that Egyptian travel has become so common, and tourists go about in herds, like cattle seeking where they may browse, and in all cases leaving their tracks behind them, in a few years these records of the earliest art of the earth that has been preserved to us will have entirely disappeared.

Turning the leaves of my Nile journal, I find many a passage that properly belongs to the story of the Nile, but as I read them, one after the other, they seem so much alike that I throw them aside in despair. Doubtless the river life is monotonous, yet it never wearies me. What if I record, day after day, the morning mists, its saffron-tinted east, its silvery west still under the sweet influence of the declining moon; the river, like crystal, with its shores in deepest shadow and its dark palms reversed in the watery mirror, as black as ebony? Then the bright, the white light of the day, and the lazy hours with book and pipe under the awning on the breezy deck; the divine twilight, when the whole race gathers at the cool margin of the river to refresh itself after

the heat of the day. Ugly buffaloes stand up to their nostrils in water, tossing the spray over their heads. Naked children sport among them like young water-gods. The Arabian heat; an afternoon of deep and dreamless sleep; a twilight that keeps me from dinner, with palm-groves jutting out into the river; still, shadowy barges bounding over the face of the waters, and soft songs that waken an echo in the heart and haunt me almost every hour. At Mineh, in the dusk, there was a mosque full of chanting boys and loud-sighing dervishes, and a sheik's tomb lit with a hundred lamps from within, and looking like a roc's egg poised on end. It was inexpressibly lovely, but a disagreeable odor drove us out from under the shore, and we drifted down stream among sand shoals, noisy with deep-throated Egyptian frogs, who snored hideously all night.

The majority of the temples of Egypt stand so near the Nile shore that they are plainly visible from the deck of our dahabeah. At morning or at evening we see a superb monument in the dim distance. If the wind is fair, we draw rapidly toward it, and in an hour or two find the Nitetis running up to the nearest point from which the temple may be visited. Two or three of the sailors leap ashore, drive in our portable stakes, and make fast. After this feat is accomplished they usually squat on the bank in a row, light their cigarettes, chat, sing, wander off into the

fields to gather lentils and eat them with huge relish ; it is their play-time ; it is our task, for we at once begin preparing for the exploration of the temples, lest a fair breeze tempt us to hasten on and omit this pleasing duty until our return voyage. Usually we take donkeys to carry us to the site of the ruins. Too often these little beasts are utterly unfit to carry any burden. Their backs are raw ; their stirrupless saddles are tied on with odd bits of cord, or, perhaps, are merely balanced on the sharp backs of the unhappy creatures, without any fastenings whatever. We have all taken our turn at plunging headlong into the sand, and fortunately have each escaped without injury.

Over dusty roads, through broad fields of grain, under palm-groves and along the edges of mud villages, we crouch in the heat of the sun, and reach at last, with unfeigned joy, the propylon. It was not yet sunrise when we came to the gates of Edfoo, one of the best-preserved temples of the Nile. The air was still fresh, for these nights are deliciously cool. The great courts with their sculptured columns, the numerous chambers sacred to the ancient rites of the temple worship, the massive wall that incloses it—all these unmarred relics of a mighty race impressed silence upon us, and we paced reverently the immense hall, where we appeared ridiculously small in comparison. Our torches brought out the color that still enlivens the sculpture, though much of

that color and even some of the sculpturing have been obliterated by the thick smoke of the innumerable torches that have been burned here for generations past. One little fellow, who was looking forward to a suitable reward in the future, followed us from hall to hall and lit matches from time to time, holding them aloft with as much gravity as if they were really capable of throwing some light on the hieroglyphics that cover the temple in every part. Leaning from the lofty capital of the eastern pylon, the prospect was glorious—the temple court beneath us; flocks of doves darting to and fro among the columns of the court, showing us their pale-blue backs; the green lawns, as soft as velvet, stretching to the amber Nile on the one hand and the desert hills on the other; the village, with its open houses, half of them unroofed, or only partly thatched with palm boughs, all huddled close together under the high walls of the temple.

When the sun rose this village came to life, and there was a chorus of backsheesh raised by a multitude of baby Arabs, who danced boisterously and cried to us incessantly as if we were indeed the gods. The town of Keneh, with its famous water jars, lies opposite Denderah, a temple as perfect as Edfoo, though smaller. It has once been buried, and is still so deep in the soil that you can touch the capitals as you walk around the outer wall, and to enter the temple is like

descending into an enormous cellar. It is only at Denderah and Edfoo that I have been able to realize anything of the life of these temples. They are so utterly dead, so cruelly ruined, and their age is so inconceivable, that I find myself wandering about them in a state of utter disbelief. It is difficult enough to believe your eyes—you can not hope to do more than that—and the eyes see only the dust-covered, dust-colored sanctuary of a race and a religion that are returned to dust. At Edfoo, leaning from that eastern pylon and dreaming over the record of the temple that was five-and-ninety years in coming to completion, I seemed to see for just one moment the splendid ceremonials of the dedication, when rivers of wine actually flooded the court, perfumed oils freighted the air, and men and women gave themselves up to the lascivious rites of the feast for days together. As I thought of this I looked about me and saw every stone in its place, and then I was convinced.

At Esneh a temple stands in the midst of a squalid village, and is buried to the roof in earth. One grows indifferent to ruins that are not impressive in a land that has so great a store of the wonderful. Esneh, therefore, half covered with mud huts that hang upon it like wasps' nests, was rather disappointing, and we lounged through the village until Michel should have finished his marketing. The sun was intensely hot, the air filled with dust, and the day a nervous one. Even the

Ghawazes, who have given fame to the village, fail now to attract. The bazaars were faintly perfumed with rose-attar; naked children, with distended stomachs, followed us through the narrow, filthy streets, begging, and when we turned on them they fled in utmost confusion. We paused at an open door for a moment. Four women crouched in a lonely room wailing for the dead. All but one of these mourners ceased as we approached, and turned tearful eyes upon us. Then they stretched forth a hand and murmured "Backsheesh!" Their jaws were dropped, and they looked the picture of despair; but their natural instinct was too much for them, and they whispered "Backsheesh." The fourth woman was bowed down in the corner with her forehead turned to the wall. She took not the slightest notice of us. There was surely some truth in her sorrow. While we idled about the town an addition was made to our passenger list, a small gray monkey, who grew homesick immediately, and looked back to shore with the roundest and most serious eyes conceivable. After dark we drifted away from Esneh, while its black profile was outlined against the west, dotted with a few twinkling lights. Everybody, men, women, and children, seemed to be singing with melancholy voices. Our crew began their river song, as if music was infectious, and in the intervals the voices from the almost invisible shore responded as long as

the light breeze and the unruffled river were able to bear their mournful melody. Out of the dark that evening came these lines to relieve the monotony of my journal :

FOR A SIGN.

Loafing along the Nile bank
As lonesome as I could be,
The twilight deepened among the palms,
The river spread like a sea.

I heard the cry of the night-bird,
The peevish and pitiful cry;
The barges opened their great white wings,
And silently drifted by.

The soft air breathed upon me,
And marvelous music it bore;
'Twas the mellow trill of the rustic flutes
Blown off from the farther shore.

Looking across the water,
I laughed aloud in my glee—
For out of the lap of the purple west
A young star winked at me.

A young, fair star, and lonely,
That seemed to wink and to smile,
And to fish for me with a golden thread
Dropped into the mighty Nile.

And I said to myself that moment,
While watching its track of light—
I will never feel lost in the desert again
With this pillar of fire by night!

XVII.

THEBES.

Dahabeah Nitetis, on the Nile.

It was with a tinge of regret that I looked over the plains on the evening of our arrival at Luxor—the port of Thebes—and saw the golden columns of the most marvelous ruin in the world flush in the lurid sunset, and then fade into a twilight that was presently glorified by the presence of the mellow Egyptian moon a little past the full. There was such pleasure in anticipating the exploration of Thebes, knowing that after that nothing on the Nile would affect us to the same degree, inasmuch as all else suffers by comparison; there was such satisfaction in the thought that we had not yet reached the climax, that we must still "season our admiration for a while," that when we swept up to the steep bank at Luxor, and were received with a discharge of musketry from the four Consular Agents, as well as salutes from several dahabeahs that had arrived before us, my spirit faltered, and I regretted that the hour had come so soon. Our crew gave three hearty cheers and a "tiger," for they knew well enough that one of the several sheep presented to them during the voyage was to be forthcoming at Luxor, for mutton, though offered up a daily

sacrifice at our table, is a luxury in the forecastle, where lentils and black bread comprise the usual bill of fare.

Some of my fellow voyagers hastened on shore before dinner, and returned from the Consulate laden with home letters and home papers. I had purposely cut myself off from communication with the world, though the sight of the telegraph poles that follow the Nile into Nubia are a continual assurance of the utter hopelessness of trying to forget it. In the midst of the stupendous ruins that lie on both sides of the river, with the unveiled mysteries of the temple worship spreading away to the "Libyan suburb," and the Colossi sitting alone in the meadow awaiting the dawn, we forgot all else and buried ourselves in a wilderness of letters and papers, forgetful of everything but home.

The morning brought us to a realizing sense of our condition. Very early we were rowed over the river by our men, and there found a small regiment of donkeys awaiting our arrival. There was the usual excitement among the donkey boys. Each little fellow was determined to secure an engagement for the day, and in his eagerness to get ahead of his rivals he backed his diminutive beast right under us in some cases, and we found to our amazement that we were mounted in spite of ourselves. We set forth in a body, but, as the beasts varied materially in

strength, agility, and good spirits, we were soon scattered along a strip of desert in which our poor little burden-bearers sank up to their knees. Then we were ferried, donkeys and all, over a canal, and remounted on the opposite shore, where we at once struck off into the green meadows that stretch to the base of the hills, and are submerged during the Nile overflow.

In the midst of this meadow stand the Colossi. I might have seen them a thousand times before, they were so familiar. Their stately forms stood out against the Libyan hills, dark shadows thrown across a background as bare as glass, and of a baked-brick color. I believe we all rode around these giant idols, said several amusing things, and having waited while a small Nubian climbed into the lap of the "vocal Memnon," and tapped the rock with his hammer to show us how the ancients were cheated by a wheedling priesthood (see Murray and the majority of his disciples), we galloped away to wander from one temple to another, and from tomb to tomb till sunset. It would be an impertinence in me to attempt a description of these temples and tombs. I note only the impression they made on me. What more can any one hope to do at this late day? Of the vast number of volumes treating of Egypt, very many of which I have been fortunate enough to have access to, there is one writer who has afforded me more pleasure than all the others. I

find her volumes the most interesting, the most accurate, the most profitable books on Egypt and Syria that a tourist can procure, and these are the works of the late Harriet Martineau, whom the "Howadji," with his pen dipped in honey and his mouth full of dates, is pleased to call "the poet Harriet."

It would be difficult to sustain one's enthusiasm at the exclamatory pitch long enough to exhaust the wonders of Thebes. The eyes grow weary, the mind becomes confused long before the first day is ended; yet day after day we return to the siege, and always with the same question on our lips: 'If Thebes in ruins can amaze us beyond expression, what must she have been in the climax of her glory? Where the columns are still standing, sculptured from base to capital, stained with delicate but indelible tints, and roofed over with stone painted like the blue heaven, "fretted with golden stars," we realize that this temple needs only to be thronged with worshipers in suitable costume to reproduce in a great degree the ancient life of the East. The ludicrous spectacle of a party of modern tourists in cork helmets, puggeries, white cotton umbrellas, and green goggles strutting among the ruins of an Egyptian temple is perhaps without a parallel in the annals of our time. It would enrage me to have this vision continually before my eyes were I not conscious that I am, myself, quite as

out of place as the rest of my fellows, and this conviction utterly humiliates me and fills me with a settled melancholy. It occurs to me sometimes that we must be a spectacle calculated to draw tears to the eyes of the gods who were once reverenced on these shores. We crawl about the temple walls and chip off our specimens, giving in exchange for these keepsakes a vast amount of sentiment, mingled with pity for the bull-worshipers who created them. Possibly, the ancients, whose imaginations conceived, whose incomprehensible art achieved these marvelous monuments, might have more compassion on us were they to visit our recent attempts at architectural display, but they would certainly be excusable if they were to ignore us entirely. At the Memnonium there is a prostrate statue of a king weighing nearly nine hundred tons. On such a scale of grandeur as this did the Egyptians build; and the havoc that has been dealt among the temples can only be attributed to a violent convulsion of nature. Columns have fallen without a noticeable scar save such as would have been inevitable in the fall of so ponderous a body. Other columns have toppled over and been caught and held in a slanting position. Great blocks of stone have fallen from the roof, others are partly displaced, but there are no evidences of mutilation save such as are to be found wherever tourists are allowed their full liberty.

Among the ruins of "hundred-gated Thebes" the Arabs have built like wasps. Their mud houses are on the very roofs of the temples—houses that are now deserted, for after a few generations these fragile tenements begin to crumble, and are left empty, like last year's nests. The mud villages are a strange contrast to the majestic ruins and the splendid art depicted on their walls. Over the figure of Rameses I, you read this inscription : "The good God ; Lord of the world ; son of the sun ; Lord of the powerful, Rameses, deceased, esteemed by the great God, Lord of Abydos"—and the Lord of Abydos was the mighty Osiris ! Beggars follow us among the ruins persistently ; blind and decrepit old men who are led by long poles held in the hands of boys ; deformed people, girls with jars of water, dog your steps ; tiresome venders of antiquities spread out their wares at your feet and cry to you incessantly. Even the flight up the wild and desolate gorge to the tombs of the kings in the Libyan hills was only a brief escape from the importunities of these begging tribes. We thought we had escaped, for we found we were not followed ; but, when we arrived at the galleries of the tombs, the whole community of beggars, water-carriers, and peddlers of antiquities solemnly rose in a body to receive us. They had climbed over the hill in the intense heat and gained on us by a full half hour.

The tombs, for the most part, are shafts sunk three or four hundred feet into the heart of the hill, with an easy decline to the very bottom. The smooth walls are plastered and elaborately frescoed. A multitude of small chambers open out on each side of the long hall in the larger tombs, and there are in some cases lofty chambers with domed ceilings, and other chambers below these buried deep in the bowels of the hill. When these tombs were opened, after an undisturbed repose of many centuries, they were stored with mummies. These have all disappeared. You will find them in the museums scattered all over the face of the globe. Thousands of them were destroyed for the wood which inclosed them, for the linen windings, which were worked over into cheap paper, and for the trinkets, the rings, necklaces, jewels, and amulets, which were seized by the Arabs and are now daily offered for sale. The supply is almost inexhaustible, for all these hills are honeycombed with mummy pits, and a tithe of them have not yet been opened. I found heaps of broken skeletons, arms, legs, and hands, wrapped in fragments of coarse yellow linen, lying about the mouths of the tombs. They were considered too imperfect to offer for sale, and had I chosen I could have brought away some bushels of fragments.

Apes, cats, and ibises have been honored with interment in these same hills, among the kings and

the queens and the princely citizens of Thebes, but their mummified remains are not often brought to light. I have found a prayer said by the priests over the entrails of a body about to be mummified. The entrails, having had the burden of all the sins of the flesh cast upon them, were committed to the Nile, and the body, spiced and perfumed and incased in sycamore, was laid away in its "eternal habitation," an eternity of some three thousand years that has come to its conclusion before the invasion of the traveling world. The priest, having borne the entrails of the deceased to the banks of the Nile, delivered over them this prayer of the soul :

"Oh, thou sun, our sovereign lord! and all ye deities who have given life to man! receive me and grant me an abode with the eternal gods! During the whole course of my life I have scrupulously worshiped the gods my father taught me to adore; I have ever honored my parents, who begat this body; I have killed no one; I have not defrauded any one, nor have I done any injury to any man: and if I have committed any other faults during my life, either in eating or drinking, it has not been for myself, *but for these things.*"

From a high cliff that overhangs the plains of Thebes I looked down upon the spring meadows and saw the shadow of the temples sweeping eastward toward the Nile. We were surrounded by a girdle of glorious hills, softened with the subdued light of the declining sun. The beauty of

the scene was beyond description, and I strove to conjure up the shades of the great past, but out of the silence came no responsive echo, and within the sacred chambers of the temples the spell was broken and all the gods were dumb. I lay in the deep grass at sunset under the feet of the Colossi. A well has been sunk between the thrones of these solemn watchers. A naked Nubian toiled at the shadoof, disappearing from sight as he stooped to fill his goatskin bucket, and turning his curious eyes toward me as he rose erect and swung the dripping burden over his shoulder into a small canal, the thirsty throat of the meadow. There I dreamed of the dromos with its double row of sphinxes, down which the Colossi stared night and day; and of the great temple that stood behind them, no fragment of which remains, and over the site of which the corn waves and the crickets sing, and I waited for the voice that has hailed the morning with audible utterance—but, no! The wind hissed in the grass; the flies buzzed about me; the sun sank into the desert, and the twilight paled before the rising moon, and in the mellow dusk I returned to the shore thinking that "Nilus heareth strange voices," and may hear stranger voices yet in the hereafter; but for evermore "Memnon resoundeth not to the sun."

There was an evening in Luxor when the home news had been worn out, and we returned

again with quiet hearts to the pastoral delights of the Nile life. I remember that we strolled along the river shore, and fell apart in pairs, and came upon one another again among the ruins of the temple of Luxor. I fear there was something like flirtation under the blind eyes of those great idols. But gods of stone are discreet witnesses; and who would not have yielded to the mellowing influences of such a moon, and such a temple, and such an opportunity? Because we are on the Nile, must we be prudish? Later, we took a swarm of donkeys, the smallest visible donkeys, and galloped off to Karnak. Our saddles turned and launched us into the sand; when the saddles were secure, the little beasts turned themselves and went down on their knees, and left us to proceed on foot or in the air at an accelerated pace. We were silent as we came upon the temple. There was a spell over it. It seemed unreal, that avenue of sphinxes that stared at us as we approached the lofty propylon; the sand deadened the sound of hoofs; even the boy drivers, who are not slow to abuse their animals, clucked softly to the beasts, and we dismounted at the entrance to the pillared court.

The great hall of Karnak, than which there is nothing grander in the world, has been reduced to figures so often that it seems absurd to reproduce them here. It measures one hundred and

seventy-five feet by three hundred and twenty-nine. The twelve columns of the central avenue are each eleven feet six inches in diameter and sixty-two feet high, without plinth or abacus. On each side of the avenue of large columns are seven lines of columns forty-two feet five inches in height and twenty-eight feet in circumference —a congregation of one hundred and thirty-four columns in a single group. The hall is roofless. It is a forest of gigantic pillars so crowded together that the slanting moonbeams fall only half way down their length, and we groped about their bases in thick shadow. Here and there bars of light streamed through an opening in the walls and stole softly along the solemn aisles, touching the hieroglyphics with absolute color and luring the bats from their slimy nests in the débris that buries half the temple. It was like a dream that night, the measureless majesty of these columns; there might easily have been a thousand of them. I could readily have believed it, and their incalculable height—surely in a dream only is such a temple builded! Vistas opened on every hand as we wandered over the vast ruin—moonlit avenues with slender obelisks at the farther end, silver-tipped and of exquisitely graceful proportions. All the wear and tear of time and the iconoclasts can not mutilate a dream temple. Daylight alone and the glare of the Egyptian sun are able to destroy the splendor of Karnak—the Karnak that

by moonlight is veiled in an awful beauty that is not of this age nor of the last, but of the time when the immortal gods dwelt here and filled this sanctuary with imperishable beauty.

XVIII.

FLESHPOTS.

DAHABEAH NITETIS, ON THE NILE.

THERE is no feast in Egypt, no birth-fête, no christening, no circumcision, no marriage, no religious festival of any importance, no fair, not even a pilgrimage to Mecca, but the fleshpot is in the midst thereof, and usually it is the chief feature of the occasion. It is the al'meh, the ghazeeyeh, the khawal, or the gink that brings fire to the eye, blood to the cheek, and joy to the heart of the Moslem—unless he be exceptionally devout. These are the allurements in the Rake's Progress. They are what the traveler hears most of, sees least of. Virtuous Cairo has banished them from her streets and cafés, and now one must seek them in the privacy of the harem or in the secret chambers of the pleasure-house, whose doors are doubly barred. Under the palm groves of the Nile the al'meh sits and sings her siren song; we have heard it floating on the wind in

the mellow twilight, coupled with the tinkling lute, and wondered not that there were rebellious mutterings in the forecastle and symptoms of mutiny, inasmuch as the music-laden wind was provokingly fair and bore us steadily onward out of the charm of the al'meh's voice.

In every town on the Nile there is a corner set apart for the ghawazee tribe. They claim kinship with Baramikel, favored by Haroun al Raschid, and they are the bewitching stars of these Arabian nights. How they twinkle! pale, moon-eyed women of ample flesh and the reckless grace of drowsy pards. Dove-eyed and dimpled, with supple joints that yield to every attitude, the ghazeeyeh is trained from her cradle in all the arts of seduction. She has nothing to lose, for she is one of the tribes already lost. If she marries, her husband is her slave; he thrums on the ood or plays on the one-stringed rahab, and sees his beloved making enormous eyes at the young bloods who ogle her impudently. If they be dwellers in tents, as they frequently are, going from town to town, he attends to camp duties and leaves his bride to sun herself in the liberal patronage of the town; at the cafés that shine out from the Nile's banks like beacons—they are in reality the river lighthouses that guide the belated voyager to shore, where he is sure to tie up within hearing of the monotonous night-long fantasia at the cafés—the ghawazee

hover in flocks. They quaff delightful draughts of sherbet, and something more potent; they fill themselves with the pungent fumes of hasheesh, when the narghileh reaches their lips as it passes from mouth to mouth. There is always a cup of coffee and a chorus for the entertainment of the wayfarer, and nothing is more difficult in the whole navigation of the Nile than weathering a coffee-house when the barbaric music of the fantasia throbs over the waters and the voice of the al'meh is heard in the land. Again and again during this Nile log have the pages been left blank, because somehow we had drifted to shore and stranded directly under the eaves of a coffee-house. The crew at such times are wont to fly in a body; we follow close upon their heels and expostulate, but mere words are as the buzz of summer flies to them; they smile blandly, point to the languishing ghawazee, and with the artless charm of children implore "backsheesh." They take their sip of coffee at our expense, and celebrate us in song; a chorus is raisable at the shortest possible notice, and a chorus is not easily cut off in the middle. By and by we return to the Nitetis, where the ladies sit and wonder at our delay. We are off again in mid-stream, with the great sail filled, and then, and not till then, is it discovered that one of the crew is missing. We draw up to the bank and call him by name. Our shouts rings high above the confusion at the coffee-

house and the barking of the thousand village dogs. It is some time before we get an answer, for there are few echoes on the Nile, so few, indeed that, when we passed Gebel Sheykh Hereede the other day, we all sat on deck and roared ourselves hoarse because we discovered there was a little echo hidden away in the hollow of the rock. The deserter is secured after a time, rescued from the snares of the sirens.

I remember the close of that memorable day when we drew up under Luxor, flushed with sunset. Thebes lay on the one hand and Karnak on the other, imperishable monuments of a great and glorious past. Scarcely had the stakes been driven that held us to that historical and romantic shore, when a handsome boy hastened toward us out of the shadow of one of the temples. He bore under his arm a rude *darabukkeh,* a deep earthen jar with the mouth covered with fish-skin. Beating this primitive drum with his wrist, and tapping a light tattoo with his fingers, he skipped nimbly to and fro along the bank, singing his song of love. He had the limber spine of a cat, this agile gaish, and all his muscles quivered responsive to the rhythm of a ballad so iniquitous that a full translation of it were impossible in a language suited to the requirements of a less passionate people like our own. One evening, as we were drawing out from land, hoping to drift a few miles up stream before the

wind died, we saw a slender little creature working her way to the water's edge, through the crowd of natives that had come down from the town to see us. She had a haggard face, very old and worldly-wise for a child of ten years. There was an unnatural light in the sharp black eye—to this hour I am not satisfied that she was not insane—and all her movements betrayed a highly wrought nervous organization, such as is not very often met with in this luxurious climate. We had drawn up stakes, and were just swinging off into the current, when this impish child, clad in a scanty robe of striped blue cloth worn commonly among the fellaheen (the peasantry), caught up her skirts, and drawing one foot up under her as she stood upon the very edge of the water, she stamped violently and repeatedly upon the ground, snapping the fingers of one hand with great energy, and all the while chanting a barbaric chant. She looked the picture of a little fury; her eyes flashed, her brows were compressed, and her breath, as she drew it in, came thick and hard; the spectacle was positively alarming, for the child grew more violent, shrieking at the top of her shrill voice, and stamping with an appearance of the greatest rage, as she saw our barge receding from the shore, while her efforts were still unrewarded. We threw her a few coppers, which were scrambled for by the crowd, and in the midst of the tumult the dancer disappeared.

This was a young ghazeeyeh, who was not yet sure of her charms.

The consular agents at Luxor are Arabs who have learned from long experience that the traveling Christian, though he may leave a spotless record at home for the inspection of his neighbors and the world in general, when he gets as far away as Egypt from the prying eyes and busy tongues, is by no means averse to ascertaining the nature of these fleshpots. Let us accept the agent's generous hospitality, which, by the way, we do at the expense of a return dozen of champagne and a couple of flagons of maraschino. The house —a clumsy Arabian structure, with thick mud walls—is built in the very porches of a temple. Three superb columns stand before the veranda of the Consulate, and tower high above the flat roof, where they support a single block of stone of immense size, still richly ornamented with hieroglyphics cut deep into the stone. A broad hall runs through the center of the house. Divans on each side of the hall suggest to us the necessity of sitting Turkish fashion or reclining at full length if we would appreciate the utility of this Eastern luxury. The hall is crowded; there are half a dozen dahabeahs in port, and "Cook's" little steamer makes a breathless halt here, in order that his boarding-school may be whisked through the temples and the tombs, and be back in season to rush on to the next station,

without letting the boiler cool. We sit in solemn rows on each side of the hall, and are apparently waiting for some one to lead us in prayer. Galaxies of candles flare upon the walls and send off their threads of smoke, that follow the air currents round and round the room. Coffee is served us in porcelain thimbles that are too hot to hold, and so we drop them into small vases of silver-gilt wicker-work, and drain the dregs of the muddy draught. We gradually lose consciousness of the absurdity of our situation, and begin to look about us as if we had some business here. We are, in fact, a promiscuous party of ladies and gentlemen, who have gathered together to witness a spectacle which is considered too indecent for the virtuous eyes of the Cairenes! At the top of the hall there are five women, squatted on the floor in a row; behind them are seated a half dozen musicians, twanging and thumping the national instruments of the country. They play skillfully and with marvelously accurate and amazingly intricate rhythm. The gradations of Arabian harmonies can not be produced on any intruments we use save those that are stringed and without frets. Your Arab minstrel splits a half note in two, and can then distinctly flat or sharp as the case requires. Wagner has still something to learn in the way of intoxicating discord, but he must study the music of the Egyptian past, if he would better himself. The

ghawazee, clad in light garments, that cling to them, sprawl easily and sport with one another until the guests are assembled. Then they rise, pass up and down the room, offering a hand to each visitor, which is in no case refused. These are the light women of Egypt; there are none lighter on the face of the globe. The feminine guests look curiously at the dancers, and examine their toilets as if they were so many big dolls. The long black hair falls over their shoulders in a vast number of small braids strung with gold coins. About their foreheads a wreath of coins dangles its pendants to the high-arched and heavily painted eyebrows. Great hoops are in the ears, ropes of coins about the neck and arms, and at the waist there is a loose girdle, a chain of jingling bells, and amulets that hang negligently over the swelling hips. The dress, parted low over the bosom and gathered close under the breast, is excessively ugly. French gaiters incase the dainty feet, and the slender fingers clasp miniature cymbals that clash musically and mark the rapid motions of the dancer. The al'mehs sing a prelude, followed by the first dance of two of the ghawazee. They stand with their feet apart and their arms extended. The castanets ring like silver bells; all the coins on the foreheads and the necks and arms of the dancers jingle; their bodies quiver and undulate; they swing from one foot to the other, sway to and fro, wave their

arms in exquisitely graceful gestures; the music is incessant, the dance unflagging; if there is any motion of the feet at all, it is merely an awkward shuffle over the floor from one end of the hall to the other; finally they whirl about, tossing their heels in the air, and the first figure is at an end. Brandy is brought them, and they resume their exercises. The second figure is like the first, only more so, and the evening wanes. The guests withdraw, most of them very much bored, some of them considerably shocked.

XIX.

PHILÆ.

DAHABEAH NITETIS, ON THE NILE.

EARLY in the morning, we drew up under the high shore of Assooan and came to a dead halt. In the center of the Nile lay the long, narrow island of Elephantine, looking pretty enough with its palm grove to the north, but sterile and forbidding in the south. There were great rocks all about us, cliffs above us that rush together at the cataracts, and sunken rocks in the river for some miles below the town. These rocks brought us to a standstill the night before we reached Assooan, though the wind was fresh and fair. Two of the little Nile steamers that dart up and

down stream like dragon-flies have struck and foundered in these treacherous waters. Here we turn our prow to the northward, for it is too late in the season to ascend the cataract. No sooner had we made fast to the shore at Assooan than the crew gave three lusty cheers, and the dignified old rais fell upon the neck of Michel, our handsome and worthy dragoman; the two embraced and kissed each other heartily, in mutual congratulation upon reaching the cataract in safety. There was a general jubilee—everybody was shaking hands with somebody else, from the first captain to the cook from Bagdad and the cabin-boy from Beyrut.

Here the great spar, one hundred and seventy-five feet in length, was to come down, be taken to pieces, and lashed from mast to mast like a ridge-pole for our awning; divided in three parts, the longer portion overlapped our barge at stem and stern, and, in place of this sky-scraper, we were reduced to a poor little sail, the very sight of which filled us with humiliation and distrust. All the winds, or, at any rate, the most of them, blow up stream. As we are about to return, it behooves us to make the most of the strong current, and to go away with as much canvas as possible. House-cleaning, as it were, turning everything out into the sun and remodeling our floating home to a great extent, we left everybody in confusion, and gave our-

selves up to the fullest enjoyment of our few days on the edge of Nubia. There was a high bank above our dahabeah, thick palm groves crowded to the edge of it, and looked over upon us as we took breakfast on deck that first morning at Assooan. Black barbarians sat on the shore in a row, offering their treasures—ostrich eggs, bows, arrows and spears, baskets of henna, and rude jewels of beaten silver; but it was so tedious bargaining with men and women who could not speak or understand Arabic that our purchases were indefinitely postponed. Meanwhile the offers for all wares were slowly advanced from English into Arabic through our dragoman; from Arabic into Nubian through one of the Nubian sailors, and back again to us in the course of time through three languages.

Assooan is marvelously interesting; nowhere else have we found such strange people, such attractive bazaars, or so picturesque and barbaric a life. All the riches of Central Africa drift by desert and river to the cataract, and are strewn upon the sandy shore at Assooan, awaiting boats to convey them to the markets of Cairo and the world. Coming out of the bazaar in the afternoon of that eventful day of our arrival, it seemed as if nothing could touch us further in the shape of bronzed skins, nose-rings, and stiff curls gummed and glistening with castor-oil; but, at sunset, as we stood on one of the heights that overhang the Nile about

the cataract, we looked down upon a broad beach along which twenty barges were stranded, and over which bales of costly merchandise were strewn as carelessly as if they were so much raw cotton. There were tons of ostrich feathers, packed solid, covered with coarse sacking, and tied with ropes; cords of ivory tusks, bushels of clumsy bracelets, girdles, and hoops for the ears and nose, made of dull, white, beaten silver; bundles of ebony, and an indescribable collection of curios, all heaped together in splendid confusion on the sand. Rows of complaining camels were kneeling close at hand, a caravan from the Soudan. Watchmen were squatted about in groups, entertaining themselves with coffee or singing to the accompaniment of lutes of the very rudest description. In the evening small fires were kindled up and down the beach; dark men were seen grouped about them, cooking, laughing, chatting, smoking; and all night long there were the tinkle of stringed instruments, the husky and mournful whistle of reed pipes, the clash of cymbals, the chorus of wild songs, the clapping of hands, and the animated contortions of the dancers, who skip like fauns and satyrs, and are akin to them in some respects.

It is thus the watchers are kept awake when the shore is strewn with the priceless wreck of a newly arrived caravan; but who would or could sleep on such nights as these and in such

barbaric Edens? Philæ, the sacred, the enchanted island, lies six miles above Assooan. As the river is too low at this season for our dahabeah to be pulled up the rapids, we all seize upon stirrupless donkeys and set forth by land. The desert sweeps to the very edge of the village, and there the withering heat and the blinding glare begin to tell upon us. We thread the narrow trail that winds through the center of a Mohammedan cemetery that is picked to the bone, and lies bleaching in the sun like a skeleton. All Mohammedan cemeteries, or rather all Egyptian cemeteries, are pictures of absolute desolation. The domed tombs are neglected; the slender headstones are thrown half over, or lie buried in the sand; not a living thing is visible save the lizards that sprawl everywhere, and here and there a gray-green thistle nodding in the wind. Beyond the cemetery our path lay between great black rocks that rose out of the sand on each side of us and made a long narrow valley of death, through which we traveled painfully. Camel trains passed us at frequent intervals—this is one of the highways of Africa—with black turbaned drivers swinging on their humps. Very often we saw inscriptions cut in the rocks, the names of travelers who passed this way two or three thousand years ago. These majestic tablets of granite, syenite, and porphyry seem likely to preserve their fragmentary histories to the end of time. Indeed, Egypt is the begin-

ning and the end; what shall be compared with her?

We sought shelter in an oasis where the impish Nubian children pestered us like flies, and the women tore from their necks, noses, ears, and arms such poor ornaments as they delight in, and offered them for sale. In some cases these beads and their coins were almost the only covering of the half-tamed girls. The dress of the Nubian maiden is a fringe of buffalo hide, ornamented with large beads and cowries, and worn about the waist. Mahatta, a savage village just above the cataract, was our port. There we bargained for a boat and crew to bear us over to the islands that are scattered in the Nile, chief of which is the queenly, the unrivaled Philæ. Never was more ado about so small a matter. We entered an open boat and sat in the high stern while our dragoman bargained for a crew. But for him we must have been swamped immediately, for a score of naked savages leaped into the clumsy craft and took us by storm. The faithful and long-suffering Michel laid about him right and left with his "korbag," a snake-like whip of hippopotamus hide, and the agile pirates left us in a body, many of them plunging into the river to escape the fangs of that lithe snake. Then we beguiled a half dozen of the able-bodied boys on board and set sail, a very shabby and unpromising sail; but before we had swung off into the current the

natives were swarming over our low gunwale again, enraged at losing their share of the backsheesh, and Michel was once more forced to lash the fellows over their shoulders before we got safely out of their reach. We landed among the rocks in mid-river, and climbed to a pinnacle where the best view of the cataract is obtained.

This cataract is no cataract, though tradition says it has been such, and with a roar of waters that deafened the ears of those who lived near it. It is now a rapid, up which, through a side-channel, the dahabeahs are towed by a hundred or two of natives, who swim from rock to rock with the rope between their teeth, and, having gained footing, haul the barge after them length by length, taking a turn in the rope and a fresh swim between times. There is one deep channel in the rapids down which the water rushes like a millrace, and through this channel the returning barges shoot like arrows. The passage is very dangerous and awfully exciting, but it is made hundreds of times every year, and in most cases the passengers remain on deck, having first secured their loose luggage below, in case the barge plunges violently, as it sometimes does. Notwithstanding the peril of this part of the Nile voyage, very few accidents are recorded. While we clung to the rocks overhanging the "shoot," dozens of robust Nubians, men and boys, entered the river at the top of the "shoot" and made the

descent on logs—the Nubian ferry—in one minute and a half, and beyond that they would have had clear sailing to the very sea, had they continued; but they came out of the water at the bottom of the "shoot," shouldered their logs, and scrambled back to us over the huge rock to beg as long as we were within earshot. Turning up the stream at sunset, our sail sifting the wind through its numerous rents, and our barge thumping about among the rocks in a ridiculous fashion, those small Nubians danced along the shore and made the adamantine hills resound again with their ceaseless cry of "Backsheesh!"

We were entering the iron gates of Nubia, a land of mystery. The cartouches of famous kings are graven on the tables of stone, so that the very hills have become the monuments of those royal guests who paused at the threshold of Nubia and left their cards. Working our way up this black valley, with the water surging beneath us, and the wind puffing fitfully from the rocky caverns that yawned about us, we swung under the shadow of a great rock into a stillness as of death itself, took in our sail, plunged the great oars into the tide, and like a swan swam out into a watery vale sheltered by jealous hills, black like the Nubians they nourish. In the center, right before our very eyes, lay a fairy island, green as an emerald, palm-fringed, mystical, and with a temple in its midst, whose

lofty pillar, graven with the likenesses of majestic gods, whose colossal columns and superb arcades were at that moment transfigured in a baptism of fire, and so the sun of Nubia set on Philæ, the sacred isle. A few strokes of the long, sweeping oars brought us to shore; a broad flight of marble stairs descended from the platform of the temple to the water's edge; rank weeds and grasses fell over them, and the marble was broken in many places. We moored our bark at the foot of these stairs, and immediately dispersed over the island in the wildest delight. It is a little island, with steep shores on every side. The temples are comparatively modern, being only a little more than two thousand years old. Part of the great temple has been defaced in a vain attempt to erase the sculptures on the wall, for it was at one time used as a place of Christian worship; but the temple stands with its indelible records of the first faith we have knowledge of, while the religion of the Redeemer has passed out of Egypt like a garment that is changed.

Philæ is a huge mausoleum; you may review it all in an hour or two if you hasten from court to court, from terrace to terrace; but every inch of its sacred soil tells of final death. The tombs about the temples have all been at one time human habitations, and these have again become sepulchres, not merely of a race highly poetic and profoundly skilled, but they are the tombs

of the last of that race and of a religion the mother of our own. As that race perished from the earth, a spirit of love was infused into the old faith, that through it the new race might be saved. You see this in every rock page of these graven temples. Osiris, the redeemer who died, yet triumphed over death, a sacrifice for the people who worshiped; Osiris, whose tomb has made this island for ever sacred, whose holiness was such that his very name was nameless in the days when the most terrible of oaths was "by him who sleeps in Philæ"! What were these many gods, in the old time, but the deification of the attributes of the Supreme God? All goodness was embodied in Osiris, who left his abode in the presence of the Supreme; took human form, yet became not human; went about doing good to men; sank into death in a conflict with the powers of evil; rose again from the dead, to spread blessings over the land of Egypt and all the world; and was appointed Judge of the Dead and Lord of Heaven while yet present with his worshipers on earth. Here it is, cut in the living rock, imperishable and indisputable. In their ritual of the dead you read their plea for salvation in the works of mercy thus set forth: "I have won for myself God by my love; I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked; I have afforded refuge to the forsaken." Life was so rounded four thou-

sand and more years ago; and three centuries and a half after the Christian era, Isis and Osiris were worshiped in the temples of Philæ.

As I leaned from the lofty pylon at sunset, my eyes fell upon a pavilion that stands above the terrace overhanging the river on the east side of the island. At that moment its pillars were embossed with gold, the ripples sang beneath its threshold, the very palms that gathered about it seemed to do it reverence and to wave their boughs perpetually to and fro in a twilight exquisite beyond expression. The low walls between the columns were like embroidered screens that but half hid the mystery within them; the whole glowed like living embers, which a breath might have blackened and an hour reduced to a bed of dead white ashes. I remembered an Eastern picture—the only one that has haunted me all my life—a pavilion in a palm grove by an enchanted shore. I had looked for this picture from day to day with faint hope, for I knew not where in the ancient and almost forgotten world it lay. My heart leaped into my throat when my eyes first fell on that sunset Temple of Philæ. It was the picture I had been looking for, and, when the full moon rose above the hills and flooded the river valley with mellow light, the palm boughs, touched with silver, waved all about us, and through the roofless chamber of the pale temple shone the immense blue Nubian stars.

Later there were the plash of oars and ringing laughter, and the bark drifted off into the night. Two of us remained to watch for the dawn—a friend and I, in company with Yussef's trusty rifle. On the very top of that great temple, under the open sky, with the gods staring at us from the low parapet, we passed the night. Once I dreamed, but it was a dream of falling or being cast down from some awful height, and I sprang up with a cry of horror. The temple swarmed with shades; were we not profaning the Holy of Holies? Then we talked, and relapsed into silent, listening moods, when we heard the voice of the Nubian nightingale, whose melancholy notes seemed afraid of the dark, far off in the hills about us. One or two other birds darted over us, uttering short, piercing cries as they discovered that the temple was profaned by our presence. All night long, with scarcely a moment's interruption, we heard the creaking of the sakia; one grows so familiar with the drone of the water-wheels that the self-same picture is perpetually before the mind's eye. A rustic shelter of palm boughs, under which a buffalo, with his eyes clumsily bandaged, travels round and round, turning the rude wheel that overhangs the river; a man or a woman, or, perhaps, oftener a child, sits on the tongue behind the buffalo, and sleeps to the droning of the wheel; perhaps the beast sleeps also, charmed by that drowsy song, and then the song suddenly

ceases, and the small driver starts from his dream to lash the beast into a walk again. The music begins like one long, lazy yawn, the chain of water-jugs run slowly over the wheel, drop down to the river, dip, fill, and rise again, clinging to the pegs on the other side of the wheel; at the top of their journey they catch on a trough, tip, gush out their waters, and go down once more and round and round all day, all night, and every day and night, so long as the river is below the lips of the thirsty and unsociable fields. Visions of homely gardens and groves of high holyhocks and beehive villages in midsummer heat, and of the everlasting flight of the buzzing black villagers, haunt me whenever I hear the monotonous complaint of the sakias; and, when I am beyond the reach of their unceasing drawl, I know that a squeaking farm-yard gate, or an ungreased axle, or some unused door swinging on its rusty hinges in the wind, will call to mind the long, low Nile banks and the water-wheels, and my heart will leap to the music as the heart of the Egyptian is quickened and refreshed when he toils at the ponderous oars, singing, "Pull well, pull long and well! and the sooner we shall come to shore and sit in the shade by the sakia!" After sunrise on the morning following that eventful night in Philæ, we left the island before the heat of the day and made our first retreat toward Cairo. It would have been a bitter experience for me, the

return voyage, did I not know that when travel has become a memory all the richness of it rises to the surface, like cream.

XX.

DOWN THE STREAM.

DAHABEAH NITETIS, ON THE NILE.

WHEN we returned from the enchanted island we found the Nitetis transformed and fully equipped for the down voyage. All the trap-doors in the main deck had disappeared, leaving seven small, open graves, about three feet deep, on each side of the ship. These graves were peopled by the fourteen able-bodied oarsmen whose lives for the next month or six weeks were to be devoted to rising like so many ghosts out of their respective mummy pits with an immense oar in their hands, and then sinking backward almost out of sight, making frantic efforts to tear up the bottom of the river with their oars, and all heaving a huge sigh in chorus when they discovered that they had failed in so doing, and must try it over again. They were to have fitful interludes of song—how familiar I have grown with these refrains!—full of melancholy and very often exquisitely poetical. Some one, usually the best singer in the crew, suddenly lifts his voice like a lark, and, having poised himself securely on one long, plaintive

note, he improvises a single sentence, a sentiment suggested by the passing bird, the cloud in the west, or a more fanciful subject evolved from the depths of a hasheesh dream. At the end of his brief improvisation his voice begins to quiver, and then it drops and rises again, it turns and soars about and finally flutters dizzily to earth like a tumbling pigeon, and is buried in the breast of the singer, who sinks with a gasp into his particular grave. All the crew cry "Ah" in a simultaneous burst of enthusiasm, and then there is silence for a moment, broken only by the measured stroke of the oars—a stroke, by the by, that consists of a long sweep toward the bow of the barge, a plunge, three desperate lunges under water, each of which causes the barge to lean forward as if it were about to get up on its rudder and walk off; then comes the flight of the oars, the swash of the water, and the deep sigh of the oarsman, who is equal to this sort of thing six or eight hours on the stretch.

Our galley slaves, the merriest, most contented, and best natured fellows in the world, usually row a couple of hours, and then lie by, if it be in the heat of the day. At night they are less sparing of their strength. Again and again I have wakened in the dark or the moonlight, when the Nile was like a river of death, it was so silent and so full of mystery, and the fragmentary sailor-song stole into the edge of my dream like a serenade.

Sometimes the chief singer seems to be singing to himself. He puts his thought into the vaguest melody, as, for instance, one evening, when we were all silently relishing the silence, he threw back his head and cried, joyfully, "O Night! O Night! O Night!" and then the chorus cried "Ah!" with the utmost satisfaction. There is often a deep, a very deep, melancholy in these fragments of song, the same melancholy that subdues their laughter and makes every action of their life gentle and almost feminine. The singer cried one day, as a stork swam through the air, "Who shall say of the two birds that passed us yesterday if they be living or dead?" and again, pulling through a superb twilight toward a moonrise that was already flooding the east with splendor, some son of Adam cried out in a delicious voice: "Oh! thou, who knowest that I love thee, leave me alone; leave me alone!" The burst of satisfaction that followed this complaint of a lover over lover seemed to imply that these followers of the Prophet have taken the edge off their desire through their knowledge of this earthly paradise. Once he sang: "Oh, bird flying swiftly over, bear this message to my beloved; and you, oh, maiden, sitting by the window in the high palace, do thou receive it for her." And yet again, growing warm with date wine, passed from lip to lip, refreshing the oarsmen, "When I love thee thy bosom is the witness; and when I kiss thee I devour thy lips!"

Meanwhile we were borne onward by the strong current of the stream, were caught again and again in the tremendous eddies, and whirled round and round so that it was at times quite difficult to say which way lay our course. Sometimes we drifted rapidly toward the shore, and then the sailors fell upon their oars and pulled us out into mid-stream, and we went backing down the river awkwardly or swung broadside upon a shoal, where we stuck fast for an hour or two, with all the tide pushing hard against us, until it finally pushed us clean over the bar, and we floated free on the other side. This sort of thing began at Assooan, very early in the morning, while the town still slept in a tranquil haze of palms and mimosas, and one slender minaret in the edge of the grove was tipped with the first rays of the sun. The smoke floated up from the barbaric camp-fires on the beach; the yellow sand hills began to sparkle in the morning light—I have a whole peck of that fine Nubian gold, more beautiful than any rock dust I have ever seen elsewhere—and from that hour the voyage was one long reverie, interrupted only when we paused to revisit some temple we specially loved, or made brief excursions to vary the delightful monotony of our daily life. All the way down stream there was one picture that haunted us—a reminiscence of Assooan—that will be the last to fade in our memories of the Nile. It was the deck

of the Nitetis, with the awning spread above it, and the sailors lounging about in luxurious idleness. In the center of the group stood a young Berber, a bronze Apollo, toying with an immense ostrich egg. It would have been difficult to pronounce upon the sex of this youthful savage, had we judged only from his physical beauty. The haughty loveliness of Lucifer was stamped upon his features; eyes full of fire; passionate, scornful lips; the nose small and regularly formed; the jet-black hair tufted over the forehead and thrown back behind the ears, where it fell in rich masses between the shoulders. A long needle of wood was thrust through it. On his arm he wore a huge shield made of hippopotamus hide, and above his elbow was strapped the villainous-looking knife which the majority of these people carry in the same fashion. Our old rais would gladly have purchased this splendid fellow, and would have profited largely by him, had he been able to do so, for there is a fine market in Cairo, and we have passed several boat-loads of Nubian slaves bound for that port; but his overtures were treated with silent contempt by the hideous old man who followed the boy about and played to him on a three-stringed lute that gave forth less melody than a jewsharp. All the Berber wanted of us was a rather extravagant backsheesh for his ostrich egg, and this he ultimately pocketed in a corner of his single garment, a yard of coarse white cotton

thrown over one shoulder and tucked in under the elbow, where it was secured in a double knot. That egg, which had to be opened with a gimlet and poured out in a pan, contained meat equal to five-and-twenty hen's eggs.

All the way back to Cairo we magnify the smallest episodes and enjoy life like children. The monkey has grown used to sailing, and, when he is turned loose toward evening, it is his chief joy to drive the native crew to the verge of madness by attacking them on the naked calves. When fate turns against him, he flies between decks in a state of frenzy, and is at last captured in his desperate attempt to scuttle the ship. As for the piano, its strings have become flabby and weak. Three of the notes are utterly mute, but, as there is a fourth note that of itself sounds a pronounced discord, the results are equalized. We are thinning out the library and growing hard to suit in these last days. Oddly enough, certain volumes of the delightful Tauchnitz edition, which we loaned to a downward-bound boat when we were sailing up stream, have just come home to us from a third barge, which we have met on our way down. The dahabeahs exchange salutes, visits, late newspapers, novels, and certain table luxuries in the most friendly manner conceivable. Only the other day, as we came to shore in the dark, we were received with a flight of seven rockets and a broadside of Bengal-

lights by the mysterious barge that has haunted us for two or three weeks, appearing and disappearing beyond sudden bends in the river, chasing us by night, giving us the slip by day, and all this time shrouding itself in a mystery worthy of the good old privateering days. On one occasion we fancied we had surprised our phantom friends as we stole up to a handsome dahabeah, ashore under a starlit palm grove, and we made a national affair of it—our friends being English—by suddenly touching ourselves off, pyrotechnically speaking, in a style worthy of Independence evening. Too late we discovered that we had been glorifying the annual passage of a great merchantman, the proprietor of which returned our salute with the immediate discharge of fire-crackers and three squibs, and afterward presented himself in person to offer those profuse thanks peculiar to the magnificent East.

Meanwhile our private journals are growing ponderous, and reluctantly we see them drawing to a close. Probably not half the little affairs of Nile life have been recorded: again and again they recur to me, suggested by a note of music, an odor, a touch of color; the indelible association transports me in a moment, and the great mystical, eternal flood of the mighty river pours into my soul, and at such times I scorn anything so modern as Rome! Indeed, the affairs of the last twenty centuries seem rather youngish.

This is one of the inevitable and rather ridiculous results of a Nile cruise, but it is a fact. When this letter has spun itself out and my pen has traveled over into Palestine and beyond, I know that a thousand little incidents will come to the surface, and when it is too late to write of them how I shall deplore their fate. I remember the day we drifted up to the high shore of Neggadeh. We had been steeped in silence for some weeks. All Egypt is silent ; the human voice dies unechoed in its warm, dry air ; the very birds are mostly mute, and our ears, that have been trained in the noisy schools of the younger world, begin to ache for some familiar sound. Under the high shore of Neggadeh we sat at dinner on deck, when suddenly out of the air fell the round, full notes of a bell. It was like some angelic message from the skies. It summoned a flood of recollections that brought the dew to the eyes of some of us. It seemed to me the sweetest, the most delicious, the most luscious, ravishing music that ever fell upon my ears. It was a physical luxury to listen to the melodious pealing of that bell. I had not heard one since the bells of Malta rang out over the sea, ages before ; and when its music ceased Egypt was more silent than ever, and I ran up into the fig-sheltered cloister of the little chapel to thank the old Franciscan monk for a benediction that was heaven-sent.

There are sounds in Egypt ; the donkey, for

instance, is not silent; the sakia snores in a summer sleep; the frogs of the Orient are double-bass-profundos, and all the Nile bank through Upper Egypt is lined with the swinging, the complaining, sweep of the shadoofs. The long sweep of the shadoof has a pendulum at the top with a leathern bucket attached, a huge ball of clay at the bottom to balance it, and is lashed to an axle that turns in the ungreased crotches of two posts. The drawers of water stand under the pendulum, draw down the leathern bucket, fill it, and then swing it over their shoulders into a small reservoir sunk in the bank about as high as their heads. Two, three, even four of these shadoofs, one above another, are sometimes necessary to carry a current of Nile water into the canals that feed the broad corn-fields of Egypt. From daybreak till long after dusk these primitive elevators swing up and down. They are often so near together along the front of some extensive field that you can see twenty of them at one glance, all dipping and rising at regular intervals, and all creaking plaintively and painfully in the melancholy chorus of laborious toil. The slaves who work them relieve one another from time to time. Those who are at rest lie on the bank in the fierce glare of the sun, as close to the earth and as fond of that hot bed as sleepy lizards. The toilers, most of them young fellows, and the majority of them quite naked, throw up their brown arms to drag

down the empty bucket, stoop low to the water, and then swing back their burden with a regular and powerful movement that has brought their naturally fine physiques well nigh to that perfection the Greeks alone have immortalized.

From time to time, as the heat of the day increases, and the hours seem to lengthen, these patient toilers lift up their voices in a wail that might compel the pity of the gods. Again and again I sought to search out its meaning with the aid of native interpreters, but it was not easy to catch their words, though the wail rang over the waters like the cry of a lost soul. It was the prayer for deliverance out of a bondage that has been their doom from the beginning of time. It was the irrepressible sob of hearts broken with ceaseless and degrading toil. It was a pathetic plea for rest and refreshment and sleep. There were hunger and thirst in it; there were misery and despair in it; there were a fainting spirit and flagging strength, coupled with patience almost superhuman and long-suffering such as not many are able to endure. But throughout the length and the breadth of the land there was not, and is not, and never can be, a shadow of hope in it. These accursed slaves endure all things because there is but one avenue of escape—the long grave of the Nile! Many of them seek it, stricken down in their youth; many of them are driven to it that they may escape a

fate even more horrible, and that is being seized in the open day and dragged in chains to Cairo (I myself have seen this spectacle in the streets of Cairo), there to be sent to the war in Abyssinia or Herzegovina and butchered by the enemy, or starved by their own infamous rulers. If the ear of the Almighty is not deaf to the cry of suffering, the lamentations of this people should draw down upon the land those plagues of old, seven times magnified. Stoicism or fatalism is the salvation of the Egyptian.

I remember the day we were rushing up against the stream, our sails straining in the wind, the water foaming under our bow, when we sighted a returning barge drifting round and round, and making little or no headway between the contending wind and tide. Our venerable rais at once recognized the craft as the one on which his two sons had set sail five months before. We approached it; all parties were on deck, for it is pleasant to touch your hat or dip colors to a passing boat, though you are not always in the mood to carry civility beyond this perfectly safe point. The little son of the rais, the pet of the Nitetis, stood by his father as we drew near the downward-bound craft, and for the moment in which we were within hailing distance the crews of the two boats kept up a storm of salutations that rendered every voice unintelligible. Close to us, almost within reach, the two sons of our rais

leaned eagerly from the outer rail of their dahabeah and kissed their hands to the old man. In a few moments they were out of hearing, but so long as a human figure was distinguishable we saw these handsome lads clinging to the rail and watching us out of sight. Their faces had looked unutterable love as we swept by them, and our little disappointed Aboolaila curled up on the deck and wept bitterly for two hours. But the old rais stood like a statue as his boys were borne away from him, and then he turned to watch the long lone shore and the palm groves and the weather, and assumed to have been in no wise disconcerted ; but the eyes of the old man were dimmed with tears, and that evening, when the sun set gloriously, he spread his carpet on the quarter-deck and turned a sad face to Mecca, and I know for certain that his prayers were longer than common.

My crocodile ? Was there ever a Nile cruiser without his shot at the ugly beast ? The fussy little steamers have robbed the river of very much of its poetry ; so have the half dozen sugar mills and the two or three steam pumps, but the crocodile has emigrated to Nubia, and there for the present he suns himself and receives the bullets of the British sportsmen as if they were so many gooseberries. If you would see my crocodile, you must drop into the bazaar of Assooan and inquire for the only mummy on the premises. He is

about ten feet long, with the hollowest of stomachs, and looks as if he were shingled with old shoe leather. I could have dropped him on the wing with a one-hundred-franc note; but ostrich eggs, Nubian girdles, amulets from the tombs of the kings—that sort of thing likes me better. In the spirit of that fox who was rather particular as to his diet, and said as much on a certain occasion, your stuffed crocodile is a bore. But we did capture one of those extraordinary birds that walk into the mouth of the crocodile when he sleeps with his jaw up, and there plucks the plump leech from his tongue. This coal-black bird has the eyes of an angel, but its wings were the wings of the devil, with sharp horns thrust out from the first joint.

We have come back within sound of the railway traffic and within sight of the rushing cloud of smoke that hurries daily to Cairo. Some of my companions are impatient to begin experiences in Palestine, and off they go by train from one of the several stations near the river bank. I stay to the end, the bitter end; the only unwelcome experience in the whole cruise. For two days we tarry under a protecting palm grove within twenty miles of Cairo, beaten back by the unwilling winds. I bless every breath that prolongs the voyage, though the air is dark with sand-clouds and my flesh prickles with the withering heat of the *khamáseen*. If we could

have rounded a single point, we might have rushed on to the port of Boulak, and in three hours or less time have been disporting ourselves in the luxurious life of the metropolis. We did it later; but when we did it I knew that the most unique, the most beguiling, the most profitable experience of my life had rounded to a close, and with a heavy heart, and a headache, and a general depression, spiritual, mental, and physical, I bade adieu to my good friends one and all, and turned my back on the dear old Nitetis, my home for two of the very happiest months I ever hope to pass. But there is a consolation in the thought that the remembrance of this voyage must be a joy to me for ever and a day.

XXI.

THE MOOLID OF THE PROPHET.

THE April heat was increasing in Grand Cairo. Under its enervating influence I subsided into a hasheesh frame of mind, and passed my time between the bath and the nargileh, the victim of brief and fitful moods.

Suddenly all Cairo began talking of the Prophet and his Moolid. It is the birthnight festival of Islamism, the nativity of Mahomet, the chief *fête* of the Oriental year. Of course I was shaken like

an aspen at the prospect: the bath and the bubbling pipe were forgotten; I thought only of the Zikrs or the dervish ceremonials, and of the Zikkeers, those bedraggled, petticoated fellows, with their tall, brimless felt hats that resemble inverted flower-pots. The thought recalled to my mind a certain solitary pilgrimage to a convent mosque, where the dervishes passed out of their dusty cloister into a two-galleried rotunda—a solemn procession of meditative souls that speedily scattered and began spinning like so many tops.

Again I heard weird music; the thin, hoarse voice of a flute rose beyond a choir-screen of fretted gold. The husky throat of that melodious instrument seemed to choke at first, and the voice stopped short, checked in the middle of a note. It bubbled, gathered force and strength, and then poured forth such a rich, clear, prolonged volume of sound as startled us all into breathless silence. It was like an uninterrupted moonbeam, that long, delicious note. The minstrel took heart, and played marvelously. There was soul in his breath, and inspiration in his touch; there was madness in the theme which he embroidered with a thousand fanciful patterns, after the manner of the East. He knew his art when he laid that reed to his lips and trailed a melody through the whole range of harmony, giving it as much warmth and color as if it were spun out of the seven-toned shadow of a prism. It was impossi-

ble to follow the theme of the cunning flutist; as soon hope to track a swallow in the dusk. It appeared and disappeared; it soared in ecstatic upward curves; it quivered in rapturous suspense; it sank in passionate sighs but half expressed, half inexpressible; it darted hither and thither in sudden delirium, a golden maze of melody; then, with a piercing cry that pricked the heart of the listener, it floated down through space, a broken, trembling, fine-drawn silver thread, lighter than gossamer, softer than carded silk. I listened painfully, but the angelic voice had faded like the moonbeam; yet still I listened, though the silence that followed was breathless and profound.

Meanwhile the Zikkeers passed within the charmed circle under the rotunda; made, each in his turn, a reverential salaam to the sheik, who was seated cross-legged on his mat at one side of the circle. Music again reverberated from the screened choir—a concord of sounds not oversweet, and certainly less interesting than was the more spiritual invocation.

Gradually the Zikkeers began slowly turning, one after another, and scattering themselves over the arena, which they filled. There was room enough for all to turn in, to extend their arms freely, to expand their skirts like tents. When by chance two skirts came in contact, each collapsed immediately and clung for a moment to the slim body of the Zikkeer before it was again

inflated. Some of the Zikkeers, turning slowly, made the circuit of the arena. Some whirled in one spot, never raising their left heel from the floor, but paddling with their right foot continually, and spinning, each on its own pivot, for a good half hour.

Most of these dervishes were grim, mean-eyed, filthy men, past the prime of life. There was but one in the score who showed any enthusiasm, any sentiment, or indeed much interest in the religious diversions of the hour. The others were mechanical spinners, spinning from long habit, and with never so much as a glimmer of expression lighting even for a moment their utterly blank faces. But that one, that lad in his teens, soft-eyed, oval-faced, touched with color that went and came like a girl's blush—how he whirled, with his outstretched arms floating upon the air! His head was inclined as if pillowed upon some invisible breast; his soft, dark eyes dilated in ecstasy; he swam like a thistle-down, superior to the gravitations of this base world, ascending in his dream, by airy spirals, into the seventh heaven of his soul's desire. What wonder that his heart melted within him; that his spirit swooned, overcome by the surpassing loveliness of the mysteries now visible to him! Are there not promised to the meanest in that paradise eighty thousand servants in the perennial beauty of youth, and numberless wives of the fairest daughters of paradise,

and a pavilion of emeralds, jacinths, and pearls? Shall he not eat of three hundred dishes served on platters of bright gold, and drink of wine that inebriateth not? And to him the last morsel and the last drop shall be as grateful as the first!

How the brain reels with watching those whirling dervishes! How the ears ache with the music that grows wilder and shriller every moment! The throb of the first-beaten *tar* gives ryhthmical precision to the waltz, and it goes on and on till the eye of the spectator turns away for rest, and his feet instinctively lead him to the threshold of the rotunda, where a livid-lipped eunuch squats in the sun, knitting. You would think that the bees had stung those lips, and that the poor wretch was still writhing with pain. He is irritable; he snaps at a child who annoys him—snaps like an ill-tempered dog—and in a final fury stabs the youngster with his needles, and goes his way snarling.

All this came to me, instead of the repose I was seeking in the deep divans in my chambers; but my reverie was cut short, none too soon, by the arrival of the friends who were to escort me to the Moolid. We dined in the best of humors, and with as little delay as possible we girded on our armor and went forth to El Ezlekeeyeh, while the whole city was astir and the air shook with the subdued thunder of the glib-tongued populace.

A strong tide set in toward the field of the festival. We flung ourselves into the midst of it, and were speedily borne toward a bit of desert that blossomed for the time being under the spell of the Prophet. We passed in to the feast of lanterns. In the center of the field stood a tall staff ringed with flickering lamps; chains of many-colored lamps swung from the peak of the central staff to a circle of lesser staffs; festoons of painted lanterns made the circuit of El Ezlekeeyeh, and flooded that part of the city with the soft glow of a perpetual twilight. A series of richly decorated tents marked the boundary of the festival; each tent open to the arena and thronged with Zikkeers, both whirlers and howlers, performing their gymnastics in the name of the Prophet.

Swept, as we were, into the arena, along with some thousands of Mohammedans, whose fervor is at white heat during all the Moolid, it behooved us to accept, with so-called Christian resignation, whatever insults might be showered upon us. The seller of sweetmeats cried at the top of his voice, "A grain of salt in the eye of him who doth not bless the Prophet!" The dispenser of coffee dregs demanded thrice his legitimate fee. We were rudely elbowed and trod upon, and stared at by eyes grown suddenly uncharitable—eyes that shot dark flames at us from between lids blackened with bands of kohl.

We saw it all: the pavilions hung with prayer

carpets that had swept the holy dust of Mecca and Medina; the splendid lanterns; the groups of dervishes who had been fasting and praying for a whole week, and whose brains were fast addling. Many of the devotees were lads, brought hither by their relations who had been through this school of fanaticism, who had run the awful risks of the Dóseh, and survived to encourage these innocents to make their crowning sacrifice.

Several of the small pavilions were set apart for the howling dervishes, whom we found standing in semicircles before their respective sheiks, the masters of ceremonies. The howlers bowed in concert, almost touching their foreheads to the earth; their long straight hair fell forward in a cascade, and swept the carpet on which they stood. Then rising suddenly and throwing back their heads, while their hair was switched through the air like horse-tails, they cried "*Ya Alláh!*" with hoarse voices that seemed to shoot from hollow stomachs starved for seven days past. How they barked in chorus, the delirious creatures! How they rocked in the air and waved their electrical locks with such vigor that the lanterns swung again, and the tent bulged with tempestuous currents stirred to fury in the fervor of those prayers! All night El Ezlekeeyeh resounded to the reiterated name of God. All night the pensive whirlers, poised on one heel, waltzed into paradise to the beguiling clatter of barbaric instruments.

Somewhat removed from the solemnities of the Moolid, the populace found every sort of diversion—strolling players, improvisators, soothsayers, snake-charmers, and the Oriental Punch and Judy. High swings cut the air, laden with shrieking Arabs, and when the rope struck a chain of bells that clanged noisily, the jingle of that high jubilee drowned for a moment the terrestrial hubbub.

It was agreed that E—— and I were to join the Austrian Consul at his residence on the day following, and accompany him to the Dóseh. We went thither at an early hour. Dazzling ladies were there in Eastern raiment, with scarlet fezes on their heads. It is so easy and so natural to assume Oriental habits in the East. Gentlemen took coffee and the nargilehs in the drawing-room. We were beguiled with music and small talk until toward noon, when we drove to El Ezlekeeyeh. All Cairo had gathered to witness the most astonishing religious spectacle of El Islâm. It was with the utmost difficulty that we drew near the site of the Dóseh. So dense was the throng already assembled that long before we reached El Ezlekeeyeh we were obliged to descend and follow the kawas on foot, in single file, working our way by slow degrees into an avenue kept open by the persistent efforts of the military. One side of the open way was lined with tents gorgeously furnished and set apart for the accommodation of

numerous officials, both foreign and domestic, who had been ceremoniously invited to witness the Dóseh or "treading." Owing to some blunder of our kawas, we were ushered into the wrong tent, where we made ourselves quite at ease among the sumptuous divans that lined it on three sides.

The harem was present, under glass as usual. Beautiful Circassian and Georgian women sat in their English broughams, and were driven to and fro before the tents. They eyed us with marvelous eyes. They turned again to regard us, with a surprise heightened by much kohl ; their glances were underlined, as it were. Who would have thought a houri capable of such worldly curiosity? Then it was made clear to us that there was an error somewhere, for at that moment a fleshy young man entered with a retinue of wise men of the East, and greeted us with a distant civility that smacked of Oxford. It was the hereditary prince ! No wonder our lady friends fluttered the harem, while, all unconscious, they sat in the pavilion of his Highness.

Our tent was close at hand ; we sought it with the nonchalance of travelers who rather enjoy breaking the tables of the law. We were glad of the escape and of the occasion of it ; likewise grateful for the slight shelter our tent afforded, for by this time El Ezlekeeyeh was shrouded in a fine, sifting rain that sparkled in the sunshine as the golden light shot through it. Music (plenty

of it), growing louder and more loud, and the roar of ten thousand voices swept down upon us, and then the rush of heralds crying, "Make way, make way!" and the dervishes thus announced advanced to offer up their bodies to the Dóseh. They hastened up the avenue in groups; each group was clustered about a staff decorated with holy rags and saints' relics. All faces were turned toward the relics—the haggard faces of the dervishes, who hung together with arms entwined, compact as swarming bees; sacred banners fluttered down the whole length of a procession made up of these grouped dervishes. Not one of the victims seemed in his right mind; the majority of them were idiotic. Their swollen tongues lolled from their mouths; their heads wagged wearily on their shoulders, and their eyes were either closed, or fixed and staring. Many of them were naked to the waist, turbanless, barefooted, and barelegged to the knee. In fact, they were of the lowest orders of the East, impoverished, fanatical, forlorn. They hastened to the top of the avenue, a part of those in each group running backward. When they had assembled to the number of four hundred, the friends who accompanied them separated each cluster of dervishes, and began paving the way with their bodies. They lay face down in the dust, the arms crossed under the forehead; they were ranged shoulder to shoulder, hip to hip, though the heads were

not always turned in the same direction, but were occasionally reversed. Friends gathered at the head of each of the dervishes, and with the voluminous breadths of their garments fanned the prostrate forms rapidly and incessantly. In truth, the dervishes seemed fainting with hunger and fatigue, and, as the crowd pressed close upon them, they would doubtless have become insensible in a short time but for the fitful breath afforded by those flapping sails.

I observed that the majority of the dervishes lay as still as death; but there were those who raised their heads and looked wildly about until their friends had quieted them, or, as in some cases, had forced them to lie still, while the confusion increased, and the intense excitement at the lower end of the avenue announced the approach of the sheik.

A few footmen then ran rapidly over the prostrate bodies, beating small copper drums of a hemispherical form, and crying in a loud voice, "Alláh!" The attendants, as they saw the sheik's great turban nodding above the crowd, grew nervous, and some of them lost all self-control; one man standing close beside me went stark mad, and three muscular fellows had some difficulty in dragging him away from the spot.

He came, the sheik of the saadeeyeh, swathed in purple and fine linen, and mounted upon a gray steed. The bridle was in the hands of two

attendants; two others leaned upon the hind quarters of the animal to support his unsteady steps. The horse was shod with large, flat shoes, like plates of steel, that flashed in the sunshine; he stepped cautiously and with some hesitation upon the bodies, usually placing his foot upon the hips or thighs of the dervishes; sometimes the steel-shod hoof slipped down the ribs of a man, or sank in between the thighs, for in no case could it touch the earth, so closely were the bodies ranged side by side.

If any shriek of agony escaped from the lips of the dervishes I heard it not, for the air was continually rent with the cry of "*Alláh-lá-lá-láh*," the rippling prayer, a breath long, continually, reiterated.

The sheik was stupefied with opium, for he performs this act, much against his will, in deference to the demands of the people; he rocked in his saddle until he had passed the whole length of that avenue paved with human flesh, and then withdrew into a tent prepared for his reception, where he received the devoted homage of such as were able to force their way into his presence.

No sooner was he past than the dervishes began to rise; some of them sprang to their feet unaided, and seemed to have suffered nothing more serious than a narrow escape; some rose to their knees, and looked about in a half trance; a few lay quite still until their friends had assisted

them to rise, when they were embraced rapturously and led away in triumph. But there were those who were perfectly rigid, who showed no sign of life when they were raised in the arms of the by-standers; and there were those who writhed in horrible convulsions, whose clutched hands beat the air in dumb agony. One, who lay with his head at my feet, was stiff as a statue; his face was emerald-green, his eyes buried in his brain. Four men bore him away on their shoulders, but his condition attracted no special notice; indeed, we were almost immediately whirled into a human maelstrom, out of which we were only too grateful to extricate ourselves with whole members.

Each dervish is entitled to two horsehairs from the sheik's horse, one from the fore-leg and one from the hind-leg; those who are injured during the Dóseh are thought saintly according to the extent of the damage received. The others —there is a superstitious belief that no one is permanently maimed—are scarcely congratulated; the seal of the Prophet is not on them; they may return to the world and the flesh, as we did, with nothing in remembrance of the Moolid but a faintness and nausea that embittered the next three hours. . . .

It was the night of the Moolid. The minarets were girdled with flame; the heavens flushed with unnamed constellations, the trophies of the

Prophet's birthnight. Once more I threaded the narrow streets, and saw the fruit-sellers sleeping on bamboo litters in the mouths of their bazaars, with only a net thrown over their wares to protect them from thievish hands. I saw mysterious forms passing like sheeted ghosts, wrapped in profoundest mystery. I see them now; I mark the wild music that floats from chambers high up and out of reach; a flame twinkles in the lattice, and light laughter greets the ear as I steal away from the shadows that lie under the eaves of the daughters of death—steal away into the solitude of the desert toward the north, for I am a pilgrim and stranger, and the end is not yet.

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